

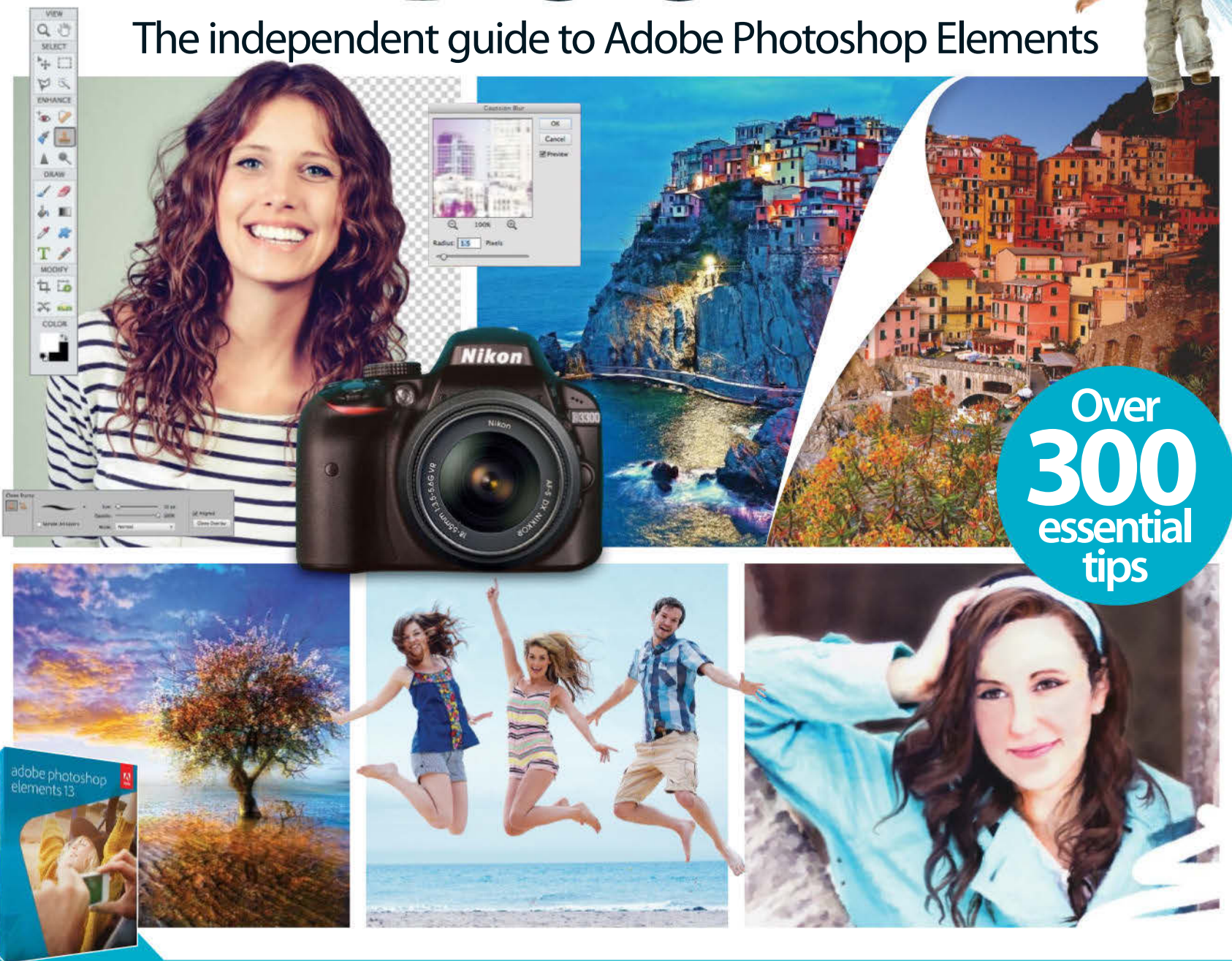
NEW

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The Photoshop Elements® Book

Volume 3

The independent guide to Adobe Photoshop Elements



Over
300
essential
tips

Fix your photos • Apply brilliant effects • Create stunning projects

Welcome to The **Photoshop Elements Book**

Adobe's Photoshop Elements is renowned for providing a more accessible image-editing experience than some of the company's more advanced alternatives. But to dismiss Elements as a watered down version of Photoshop would be doing it a disservice. In fact, it provides all the tools necessary to create some quite stunning digital art. In The Photoshop Elements Book, we'll show you how to harness the power of this brilliant piece of software to help transform your photos and create amazing artwork from scratch. From simple tips and tricks, to advanced project ideas, to the wealth of free resources available on our FileSilo service, you'll find plenty to keep you occupied here.



The Photoshop Elements Book

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**Photoshop®
creative**
bookazine series





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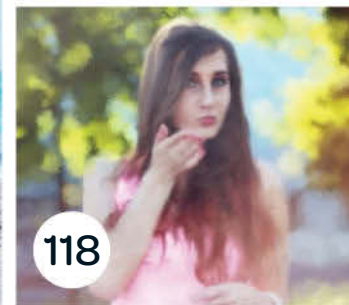
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"It might seem simple at first, but you'll be astounded by the projects you can create in Elements"

Discover the very best that Photoshop
Elements has to offer

60

OUT OF THIS WORLD
PHOTOSHOP TIPS



01 SCRUBBY SLIDERS

The Photoshop feature with perhaps the goofiest name can result in serious time saving. Scrubby sliders, found in numeric settings such as opacity (in the Layers palette or individual tools) and font size, allow you to click and drag on the setting's label to adjust.

02 PRECISELY POSITIONED GUIDES

Guides are a great tool to make use of when lining up separate elements and planning out a composition. To position elements with precision, go to View>New Guide, choose Horizontal or Vertical, then enter a value. If you have CC, there are new options added to the mix. New Guide Layout allows you to work with columns and rows, and New Guides From Shape provides guides that align with the edges of a selected layer or shape. Don't forget to use them!



03 DODGE AND BURN

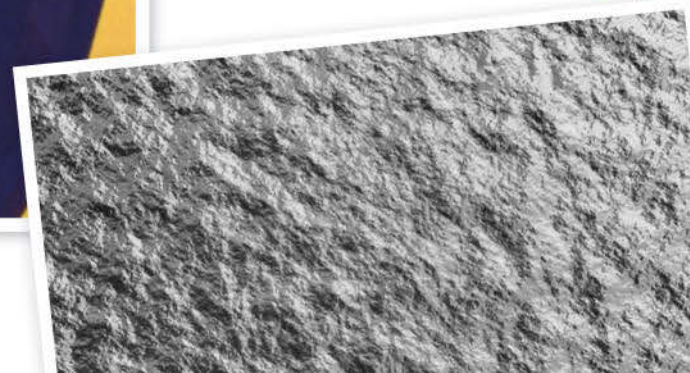
Need to add dodging and burning to your non-destructive workflow? No problem. Create a new layer above your target layer and fill with 50% grey (#808080). Paint with white to dodge, black to burn. Use a Soft Round brush, and start at a low opacity.

04 FLATTEN IT

Flattening artwork means that your image and all the layers that make it up are uneditable. To make final retouches to a flattened document, select all layers, drag to New Layer icon and merge duplicates. Hide all previous layers and work on the newly created one.

05 MAKE TEXTURES

Use filters to create your own textures! Set to default colours (press D) to get the most traction with your filters. Apply a filter that creates something from thin air, like Clouds. Follow with other filters, such as Bas Relief for a rocky texture.





06 TOYTOWN EFFECT

Head to Filter>Blur Gallery>Tilt Shift to apply a toytown effect to your pictures. This effect will make the foreground in your picture look bigger in relation to the setting – hence the name – and it's best used with images of cities.

07 PERFECT SELECTIONS

If you need a precise selection, create a perfect square or circle selection by holding down the Shift button while you select; the circle can be useful for creating bokeh, for example. It's the same with the Crop tool too; hold down Shift, and you can crop to a perfect square.

08 IMPRESSIONIST BRUSH

You can turn any picture into a Monet-like masterpiece, just by using the Impressionist brush in Elements. Use a small brush over a painting to focus on the details, and use a bigger brush to create a blurrier painting effect.

09 SMUDGE TOOL

Smudge your photos to give a flowing feel to painted hair. Set the Strength to low, build up subtle smudged strokes, and set the size of the brush lower for areas where hair crosses over. Watch out for hairlines, though; you don't want to blur skin with hair.

10 BURN PORTRAITS

The Dodge and Burn tools are great for shading and highlighting anything, but the Burn is especially useful on painted subjects, as it brings the saturation out of a picture as well as darkens it. Use it on the shaded parts.

11 EXCLUSION LAYER

You can quickly and easily add a layer of dark colour and set it to Exclusion to create a fantasy, dreamy feel over colour in your paintings.



12 KEEP IT STRAIGHT

Hold Shift and drag in the direction you wish to paint, to keep the stroke straight.

13 FILL/ OPACITY

If you want to lower the opacity of a layer without affecting the layer style that you've just created, change the Fill setting, which is situated just below the Opacity slider. To turn off a layer style completely, though, click the eye icon next to it.

14 CONTIGUOUS

If you want to select every pixel of a particular colour, the Color Range tool isn't the only option in town. Instead, you can use the Magic Wand tool, while making sure to check the Contiguous button. Then lower the Tolerance to become more accurate with selecting colour.

15 SEAMLESS TEXTURES

Create a seamless texture from a single picture by splitting that picture into four equal chunks, and moving each corner to the opposite side. Then, using the Clone tool, hide the seams as best you can to make it look like the original picture.

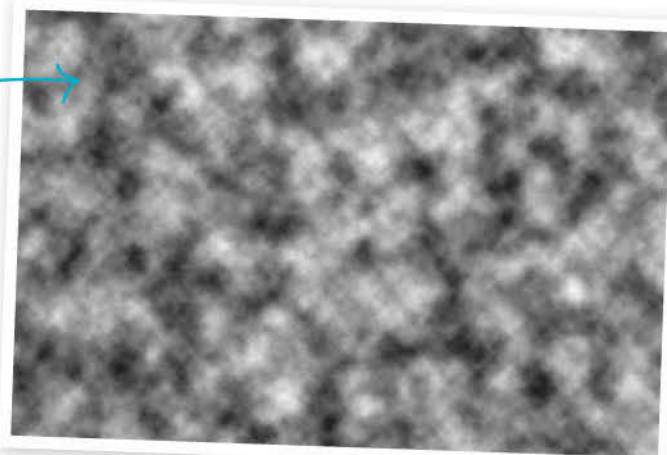


16 TWO MONITORS

Use two monitors and display two desktops across them to improve your workflow. You might want to dedicate one completely to Photoshop and one to research, or you may choose to place different Photoshop documents in each – the choice is yours!

17 SEAMLESS CLOUDS

If the canvas pixel dimensions are powers of two (that is 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, 512, 1,024 and so on), then the Cloud filter will render the cloud pattern in a way that creates a perfectly seamless texture when tiled.



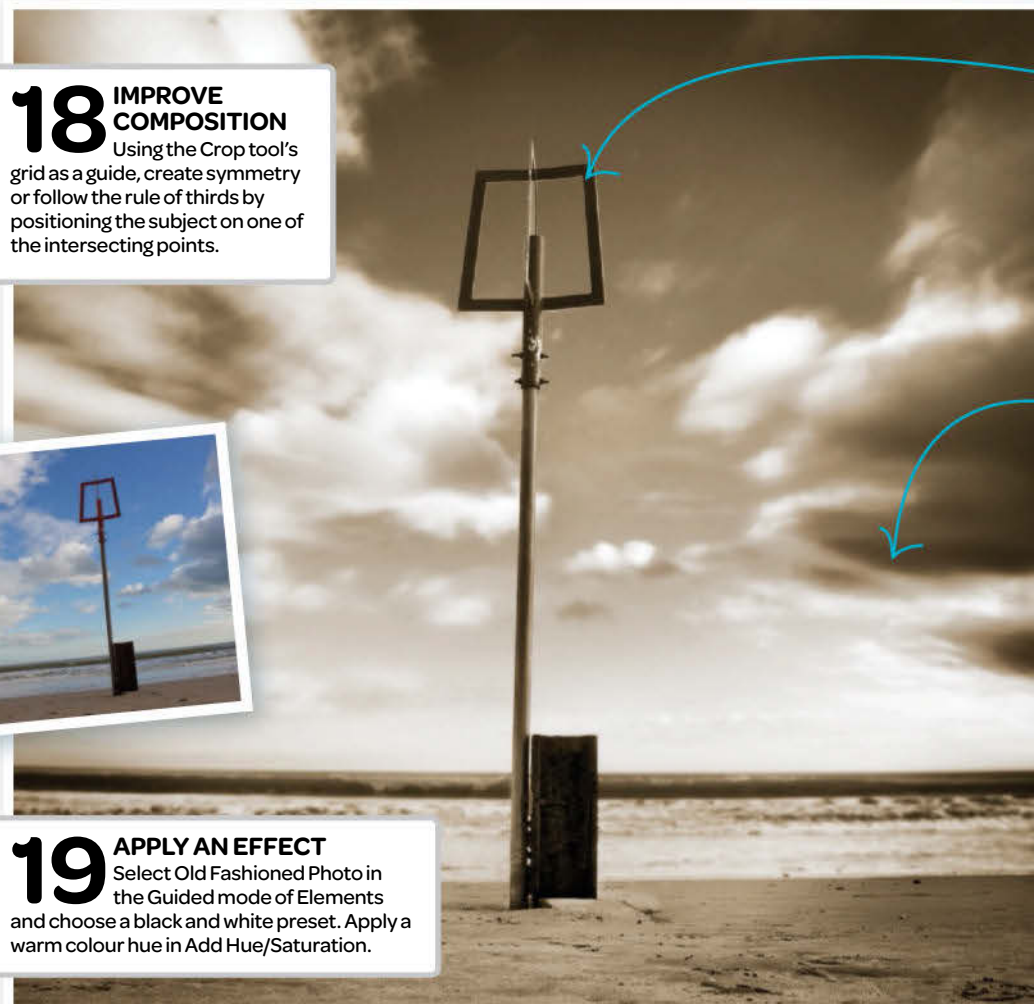
18 IMPROVE COMPOSITION

Using the Crop tool's grid as a guide, create symmetry or follow the rule of thirds by positioning the subject on one of the intersecting points.



19 APPLY AN EFFECT

Select Old Fashioned Photo in the Guided mode of Elements and choose a black and white preset. Apply a warm colour hue in Add Hue/Saturation.



20 FIX OPTICAL DISTORTIONS

Straighten up tilting subjects with the Perspective Crop tool. Select the entire image then reposition one of the corner crop handles, so the gridlines line up with what should be a vertical line in the image. Do the same on the other side and hit enter to confirm.

21 CREATE DEPTH OF FIELD

Make your subject the focal point by blurring the background. Select Depth Of Field>Custom in Elements' Guided mode and with the Quick Selection tool, make a selection of the subject you want to remain sharp. Click Add Blur and adjust the Blur slider to control the intensity of the effect.

22 SELECTION SHORTCUTS

Each tool set has a shortcut key that selects it and cycles through the tools (use Shift in Photoshop to cycle; not necessary in Elements). M is for Marquee tools, L is for Lasso tools and W (Photoshop) or A (Elements) is for Magic Wand/Quick Selection tools.

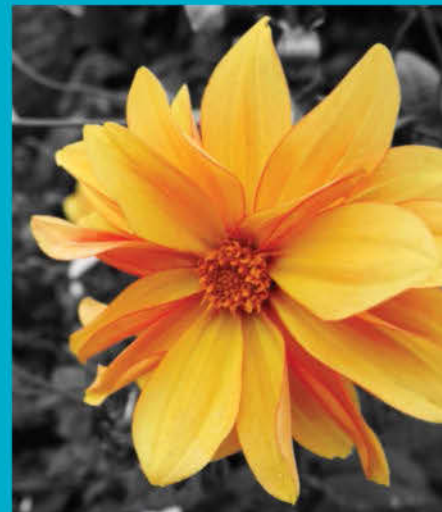
23 POP ART EFFECTS

Add a fun effect to your images in Elements by selecting the Pop Art option from the Guided mode. Now pick one of the two different Pop Art styles and then click to convert your image. With this done, it's just a case of following the instructions on-screen to apply colour and duplicate the image for that distinctive grid style.



24 MACRO EFFECTS

Make your macro subject stand out in Elements by applying a selective colour effect. In Expert mode use the Quick Selection tool to select the subject then go to Layer>New>Layer via Copy. Click on the Background layer below and go to Enhance>Convert to Black and White and choose a monochrome preset.



25 FADING OUT

If you want to fade an object out from a picture lightly – perhaps you want to leave just a ghostly hologram-like figure – use the Clone tool. Set the Opacity low and the brush edge soft and just draw over whatever you like, effectively erasing them from the scene.



26 EYE GLINTS

It doesn't matter what kind of cartoon you're creating, most illustrated portraits can benefit from a white dot in each eye, to suggest a glint. Simply choose a brush about a quarter of the size of the pupil and tap in the eye to apply.



27 INSTANT HDR

There are countless ways to create an HDR effect and numerous plug-ins. For a quick fix though, duplicate your layer, desaturate (Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+U) and set to Overlay.

28 HIGH PASS

For an easy sharpen, duplicate your picture, head to Filter>Other>High Pass and select a value of 10-15 pixels. Set this layer to Overlay and you'll see more detail in your picture; mask out any areas you want to remain blurry.

29 CLIPPING MASKS

Clipping masks can limit an effect, adjustment, or layers to a base layer. To create a clipping mask, select a layer and then go to Layer>Create Clipping Mask.

30 REALISTIC SHADOWS

To create shadows, make a new layer and set the blend mode to Multiply. Add shadows using a soft black brush. Matching the angle will sell your fake shadows.

31 STACKING FILTERS

Photoshop's Smart Filters are great at helping to keep your workflow non-destructive. To create a Smart Filter, simply go to Filter>Convert for Smart Filters.

32 FIX PHOTOS

Many people might bin old photos that are scratched, blemished or damaged, but you needn't if you know how to repair them. Use a mixture of the Clone Stamp, Content-Aware and the Spot Healing brush to repair, and bring in normal brushes for colours. It's surprising how much can be fixed.

33 MASK IN

Here's a bit of a twist on a normal procedure. Instead of masking things out of your picture, why not have a go at masking them in? Simply place your new layer over the original one and rather than using a black brush on the white layer, invert everything. You might find that it is easier to work this way, depending on your style.

34 SUBTLE FILTERS

There are only a set number of filters in Photoshop and Elements. This means it's easy to spot an effect, so try and be as subtle as possible when you use them. If a filter opens in the Filter Gallery, try using the New Effect Layer button to mix filters together, apply them sparingly, and find creative ways to use them.



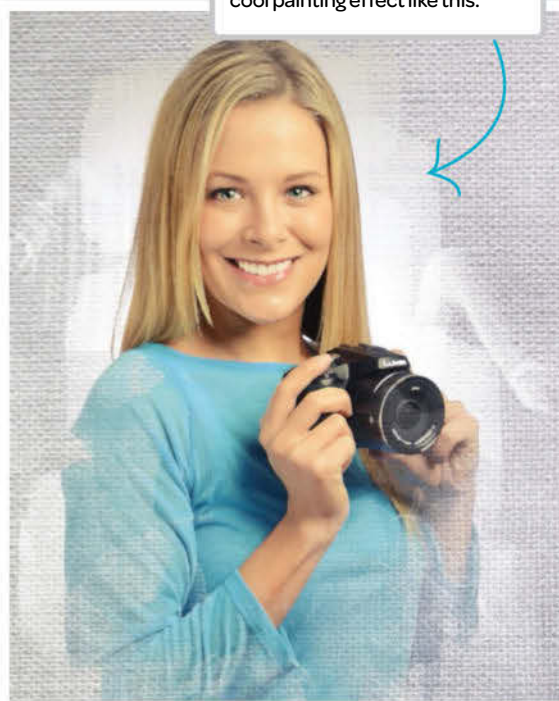
35 PASTE IN PLACE
To copy something from one document into another and paste it into the exact same position, you need to use Paste in Place. You can find this under the Edit>Paste Special menu or use the shortcut Shift+Cmd/Ctrl+V.



36 SCREEN EXPOSURE
If you want to quickly fix underexposure, or even just a dark picture, there's a quick fix on hand to help. Simply duplicate your image, set this layer to Screen, and then adjust the opacity according to how light you want the picture to be.



37 CREATE A CANVAS EFFECT
Masking can always be used for grandiose compositions, but it's also a really good tool that you can use for the small scale. Mask a picture onto a canvas texture with a paint stroke brush for a cool painting effect like this.



38 GLOWING HIGHLIGHT
If you're struggling to make an object stand out from its background, it's a great idea to add a shadow, but what about a subtle Outer Glow? Head to Layer Styles and turn the opacity down low; it can give extra excitement to your foreground.

39 STOCK IMAGES
It pays to build up a library of 'stock' images on your computer that you can drop into projects when necessary. When you are out and about, take pictures of things that you think would make good textures or backgrounds, for example – you never know when these will come in useful for future projects.

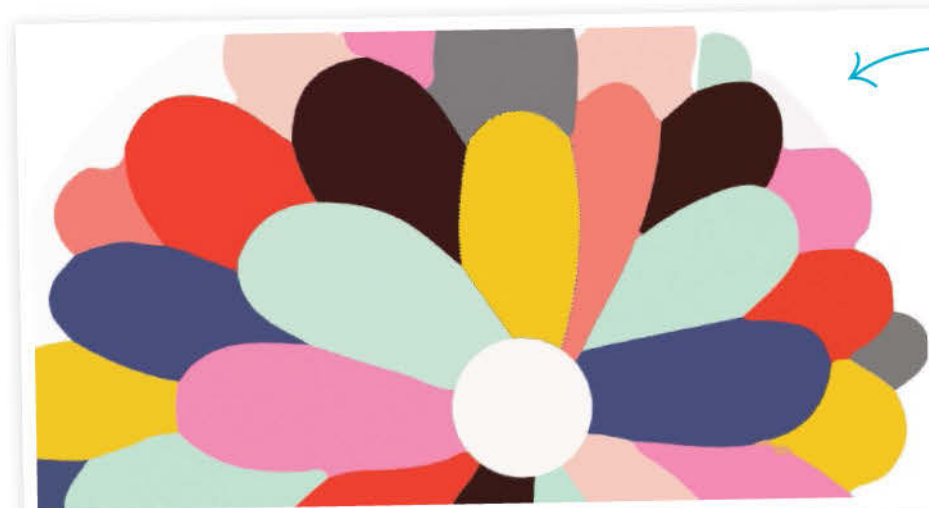
40 QUICK ADJUSTMENTS
If you want a five-minute picture fix, head to the Quick tab in Elements and apply photo edits, including sharpness, brightness and colour. It's good to prep your pictures before you use the Expert Edit.

41 BRUSH ANGLE
When you are painting with the Brush tool, you can always change the angle of the brush to suit your specific needs, just as you would if you were painting in real life. To do so, open the Brush window, then select Brush Tip Shape and you will see the Angle control option there.

42 LAYER STYLES
Layer styles are always great for adding to text, illustrations and so much more, but why not try experimenting with using them in creative ways? You can apply a style to adjustment layers, or even a few layers at once by adding them to group folders.

43 KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS
Learn the shortcuts of Elements and cut time from your workflow. This can be as simple as remembering to hit Cmd/Ctrl+S to save, or as sophisticated as the Cmd/Ctrl+Opt/Alt+Shift+E command that takes a screenshot of all lower layers.

44 GRADIENTS
Creating your own gradient is easy. Simply select the Gradient tool (G), open the Gradient Editor (click on the gradient sample in the Options bar). Now click the colour stop under the gradient bar and choose a new colour. You can add extra stops to your gradient and also decide where they are.



45 USING FILL

The Fill tool (G) is great when working with selections, quickly filling large areas of colour with one click. A great shortcut for even quicker fills is Cmd/Ctrl+Backspace. This fills in your selected area in whatever background colour you have set.

46 PSYCHEDELIC EFFECTS

Need some instant psychedelia in your creations? Grab the Gradient tool and choose a colourful preset like Spectrum. Set the tool's blend mode to Difference. On a blank layer, drag out gradients repeatedly. The colours will interact with each other, resulting in some really major trippiness.

47 CHANGE OPACITY FAST

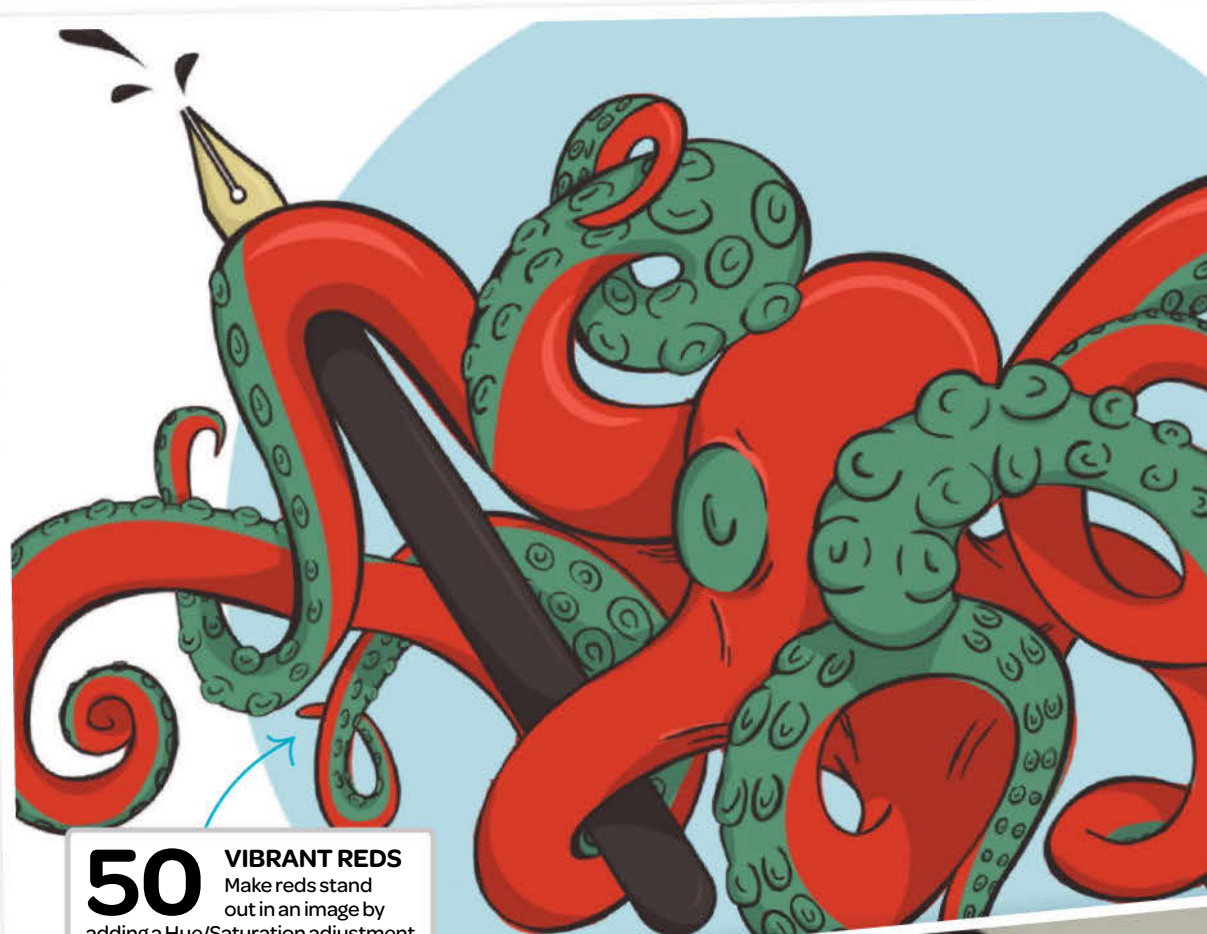
If you need to experiment with different opacity settings, you don't have to just use the slider. Select the layer you want to adjust, and make sure you have a tool active that doesn't have an opacity setting, such as the Move tool. Press 1 for 10%, press 23 for 23%, and so on.

48 MOVE AND SAVE STYLES

Often in big compositions, you find yourself using the same style repeatedly. If you are using the same settings each time, save time by moving styles from one layer to another by clicking and dragging the fx icon (hold Option/Alt to copy).

49 ARTISTIC FILTERS

If you're turning a photo into a painting, use the Paint Daubs filter first before using the Mixer Brush. The Paint Daubs filter will mimic the strokes of a paintbrush, creating a pattern which you can then blend using the Mixer Brush tool.



50 VIBRANT REDS
Make reds stand out in an image by adding a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer, selecting Reds from the Master drop-down and setting the Saturation to +25 and the Hue to -5.

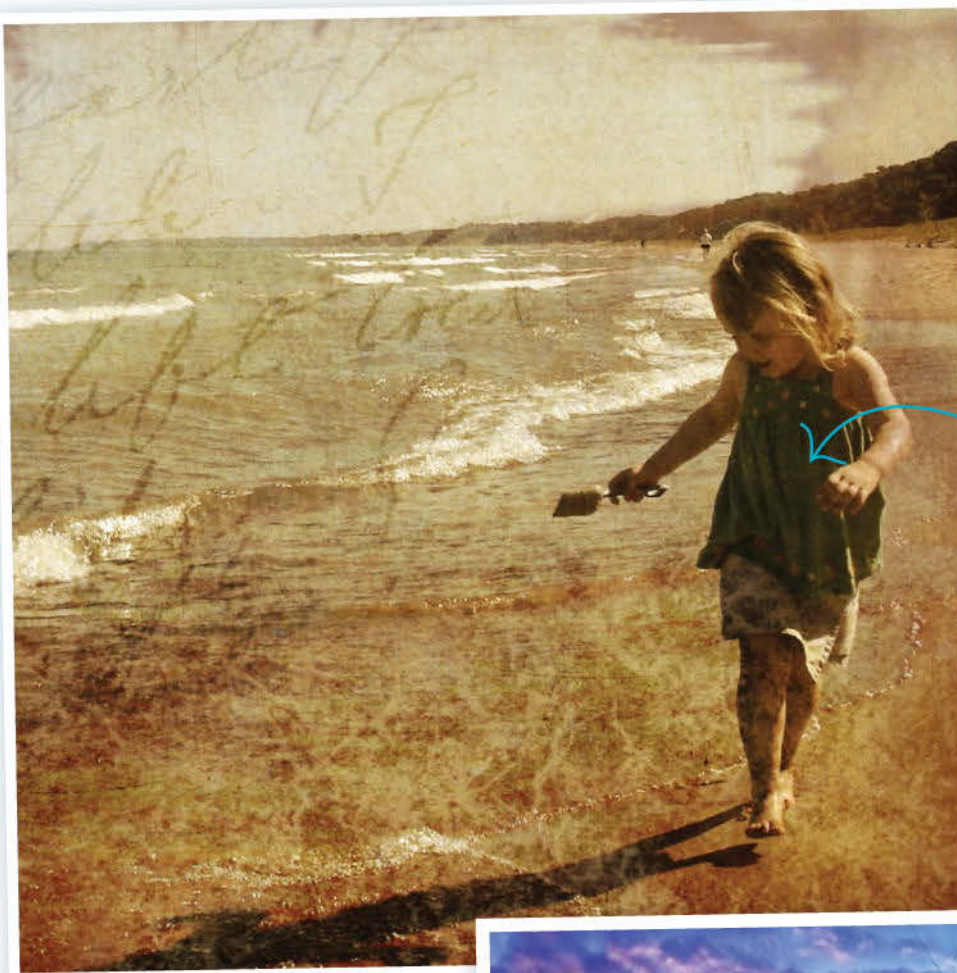
51 DOUBLE EXPOSURES

Double-exposure effects are everywhere, and you can start creating your own with this quick technique. Paste an image over your primary subject, then set the blend mode to Screen. If you need to tone down areas, add a layer mask and paint black with a soft-edged brush.

52 HEALING

The Clone Stamp tool is essential when retouching images. Use it non-destructively by creating a new layer (Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+N), and with the Clone (S) tool selected, change the drop-down in the top toolbar from Current Layer to Current & Below.





53 RENDER SELECTION
When rendering a 3D scene, select a small area first and just render that portion. This is much faster than rendering the whole scene, and works great as a test render or preview while adjusting the textures or lighting.

54 GRUNGE MASKING
Layer masks are great for grunge effects and the simplicity of them makes the technique all the more appealing. Apply a mask to a layer to delete (and paint back in should you need to) areas of one layer to reveal the layer underneath.

55 DOWNLOAD BRUSHES
Photoshop comes with a plethora of brush tips, all of which are customisable. For more advanced brushwork, you can download an array of easily downloadable tips from (often-free) resource sites like DeviantArt.

56 BRUSH PRESETS
Don't settle with the default brush tips, choose Window>Brushes for options. Scattering allows you to alter how regular (or irregular) your brush stamps fall while Texture gives your tips extra depth and interest – the key is always to experiment!

57 BLEND MODES
Try layering photos and applying a new blend mode to each. Overlay is great for subtle results, while others like Color Dodge help instantly select objects. Try layering three separate shots with texture, varying each layer's opacity, too.



58 CONSIDER LIGHT
Light source is important, specifically when you've comped two images together. Getting it wrong can make it look unnatural. Is there a light in any of the images? Is there sunshine? Discover where the light is coming from and then ensure shadows and reflections follow it.

59 STRAIGHTEN UP
Whether you use Photoshop Elements, CS or CC, all versions of the software come with several easy-to-use straightening tools and techniques. In Elements, this feature is immediately accessible from the Edit mode. Simply navigate to this mode and then select the Straighten tool to begin making adjustments to your skewed images.



60 STAY HUNGRY
Keep up your appetite for knowledge. Make sure you never stop learning! Assume you don't know everything and look to expand what you know. Find new resources to learn from. Photoshop is a deep program, and there is always more to learn.

Starter techniques

Enhance your skills and improve your projects with these techniques



18 Get to grips with Elements' Organizer
Learn more about the handy mode

22 Make simple selections for the perfect cutout
Learn which tools to use for cutouts

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Find out how to paint and erase

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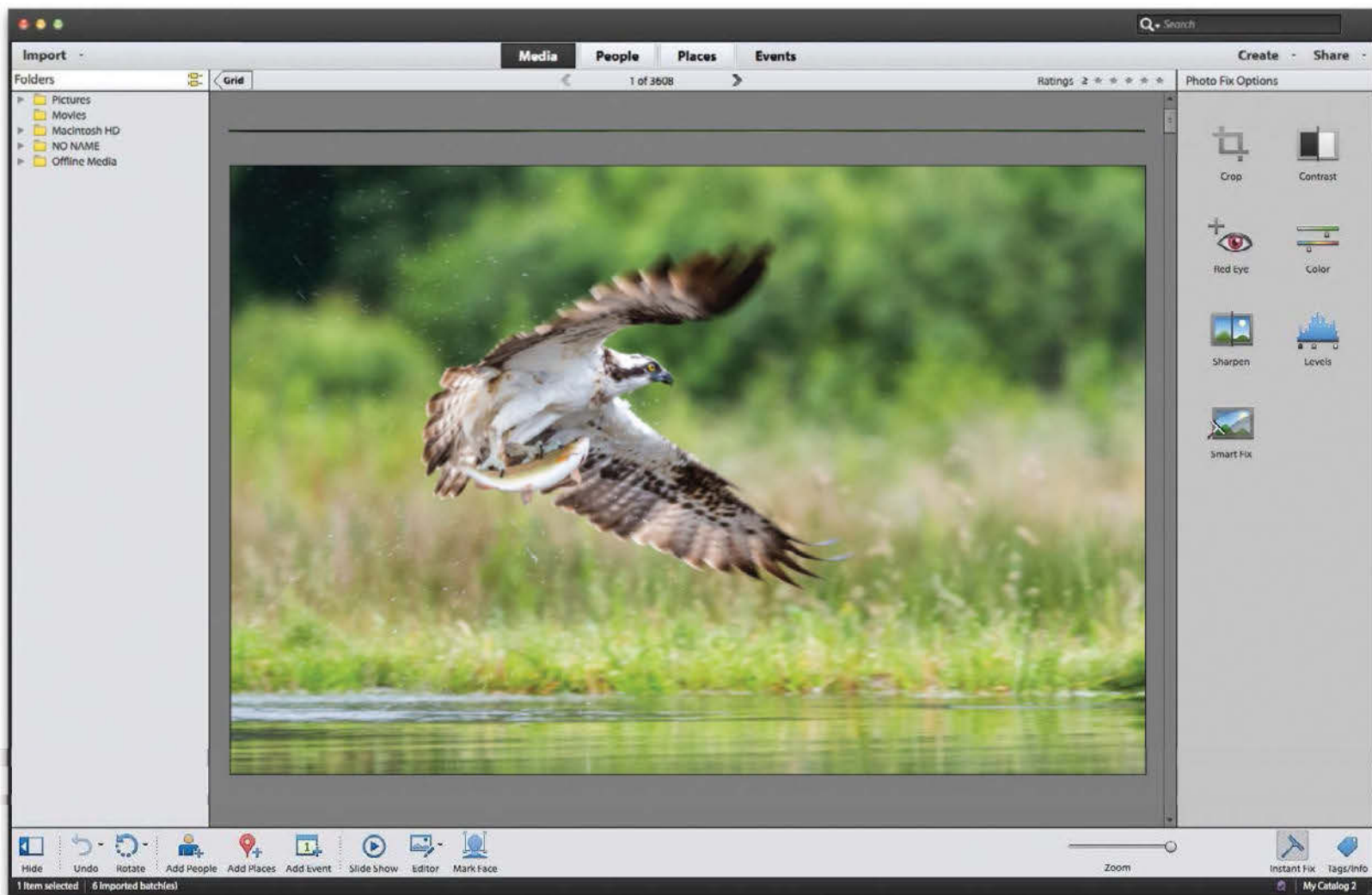
“The simplest tools in Elements can often be the most effective”

42 Use the Cutout filter creatively
Add illustrative effects

44 Master the Reduce Noise filter
Eliminate noise in your pictures

46 Understand the Displace filter
Open up a world of creativity





Get to grips with Elements' Organizer

Source file available

Get organising using the supplied start files

Learn more about Elements' own organising program

Despite the fact that the Organizer is flagged up on the entry screen for Elements 12, the ever-so-useful tool is often overlooked for the more complex Editor companion. Yet there are many helpful things inside the Organizer which will ultimately assist you when you come to work with your images in the Editor.

The Organizer is handy for importing images from your camera, reading your memory card or other external devices. You can find out how to import images in the following tutorial. From here, it makes browsing through your images quick and easy, offering a great Bridge-style viewing platform for your images.

Something that's also regularly overlooked is the Organizer's range of powerful editing tools. Within the Organizer you can apply a number of different edits, using the Smart Fixes, Red-Eye Removal tool and Sharpness and Color sliders. Sometimes this could be all you need to fix an image.

From there, though, if the Organizer's editing options aren't enough, you can open images into the Editor section of Elements, and carry on working on your image seamlessly. It's all really simple, and you'll probably be wondering why you'd never thought to utilise the Organizer more.

Standout feature

Find previous versions

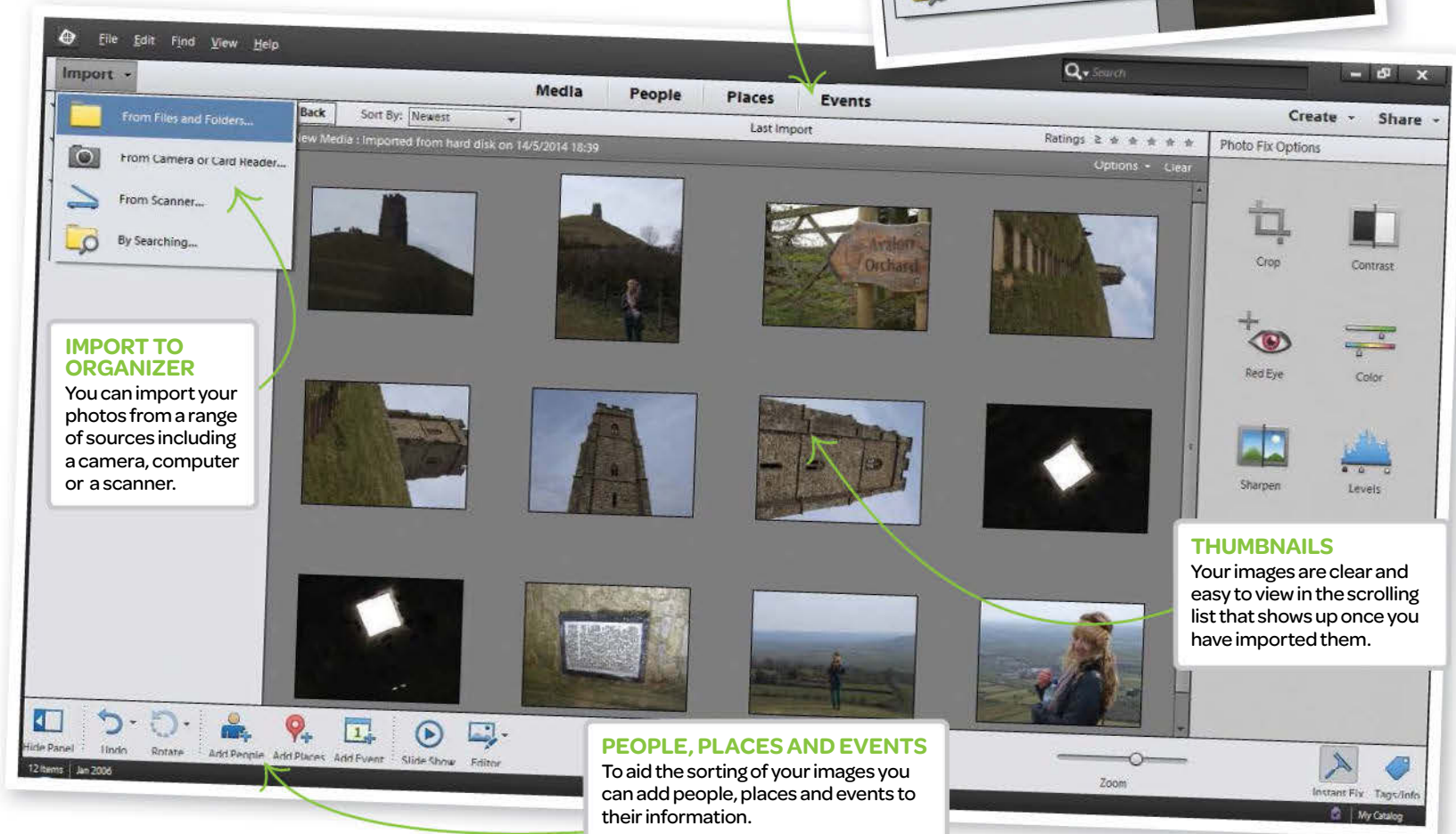
The great thing about the Organizer is that it saves your edits as a separate file, but it also enables you to access older versions of your photos in a quick and easy way. In the Media Library to the right of your photo is a small line with an arrow next to it. Click on this and you'll be able to see all variants of the photo that you have edited with the Organizer. You can then select these versions to edit them instead of the most recent one.

Technique 1

Import with Organizer

Load your files into Photoshop using the Organizer

Element's Organizer operates in a similar fashion to Adobe's Bridge. It shows you all of the images that you have imported and enables you to organise them right there with minimal effort. You can import your photos from anywhere and tag the people, places and events to your images to make them easier to find.



IMPORT TO ORGANIZER

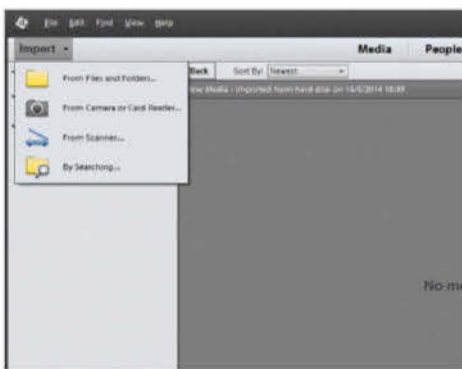
You can import your photos from a range of sources including a camera, computer or a scanner.

THUMBNAILS

Your images are clear and easy to view in the scrolling list that shows up once you have imported them.

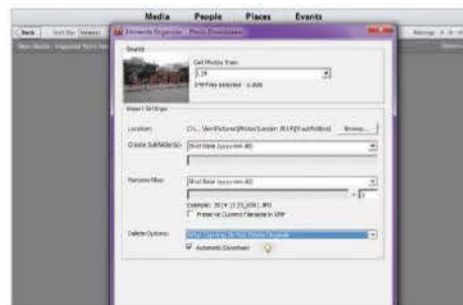
PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS

To aid the sorting of your images you can add people, places and events to their information.



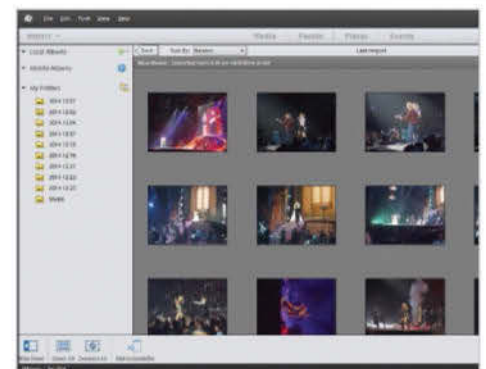
An empty interface

01 The Organizer interface will initially be blank. In the top left-hand corner, click Import, and select which device you would like to import your photos from. Make sure your camera is connected, or your SD card is in the slot, and choose From Camera or Card Reader.



Import settings

02 From the first drop-down menu, select your device. Then adjust the options as per your requirements. You can also check Automatic Download so the next time you connect your camera it will automatically complete the command. Advanced Dialog enables you to select exactly which pictures to import.



Et voilà!

03 Add tags to people and set places for each of your photos. Click on the corresponding button in the interface to set them. Add your information and drag the corresponding photos into the Media Bin. Click Done and your Event will be saved.

Technique 2

Edit in Organizer

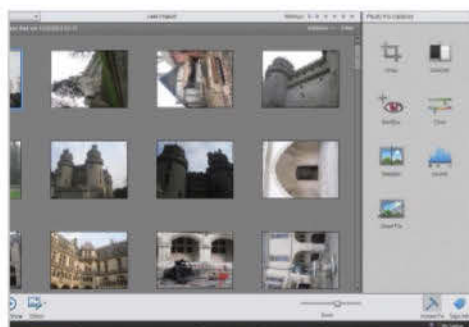
Apply simple edits without having to open the Editor

You may not have known this before, but the Elements Organizer actually has its own set of editing tools. They are the most simple tools that feature in Elements' Editor. Essentially the Organizer is used to correct colours, revise sharpness and crop your images to the right size. Here we show you how to make use of them.



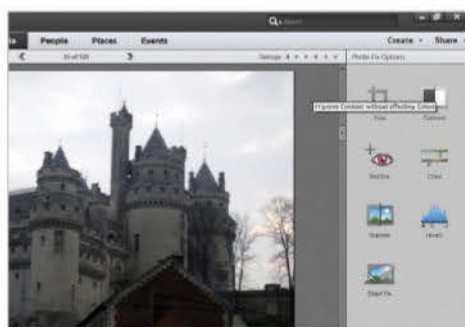
Improve colour and detail

Apply quick edits to images in the Organizer



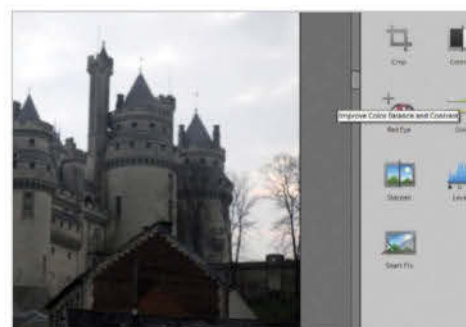
Instant fixes

01 Organizer's Instant Fix edits are easy to find; there's a button at the bottom marked Instant Fix. Click this and the sidebar will show several editing options including Crop, Contrast and Smart Fix. Use the toggle in the bottom sidebar to zoom in.



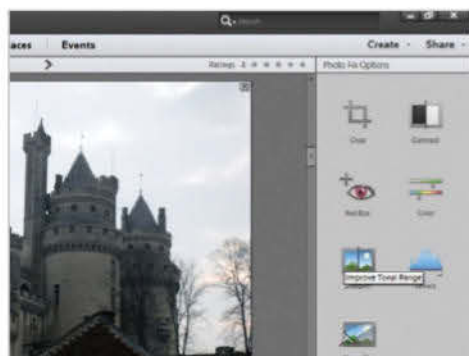
Contrast correction

02 Editing in the Organizer is simple; just click on the option you wish to choose and the software will auto-fix your photo, and then save an edited version to your computer. Fixing the contrast will improve the lighting of your picture without losing any of the colours.



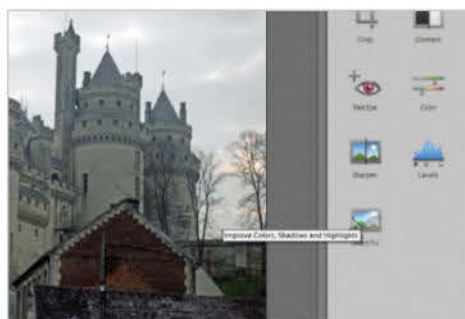
Colour control

03 The Color option takes things further and improves both the contrast and the colour balance. It improves the richness of colours, and brings out more detail in the image by making a dull image brighter. It turns down the contrast if an image is too bright.



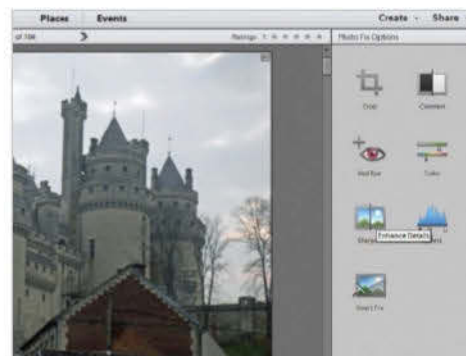
Levels

04 We have used the Levels option rather than Contrast or Color to edit the image. This has added a bluer tint to the photo. The aim of the Levels Instant Fix is to improve the tonal range of the photo.



Smart Fix

05 By clicking the Smart Fix button, Organizer will improve shadows, highlights and colours of your image in one go. It produces different results to both the Color and Contrast tools. The final thing you want to do is Sharpen.



Sharpen

06 Click on Sharpen to enhance the details of your image, giving details a crisper feel. Sometimes you might feel as if the image doesn't need to be sharpened, so you can leave this out of the edits.

Technique 3

Move into the main Editor

Once you've done all you can in Organizer, take your image into Elements' Editor

Although the Organizer is full of many little-known tools to quickly edit your images, it does have its limits, but that's okay because you've got Elements' Editor to play around with as well. It is quick and simple to open your images into the Editor straight from Organizer, without even having to exit the program, so what are you waiting for? Let's see just what the Editor can offer.

GUIDED EDITS
Follow the Guided edits and click your way to perfection.

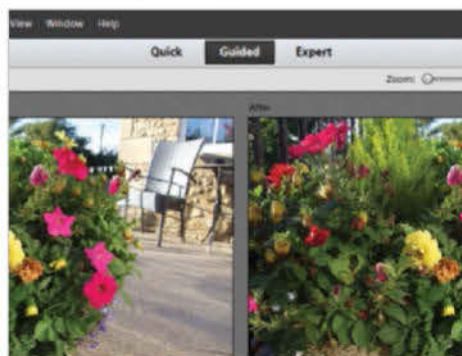


BETTER COLOUR
Make use of the Editor's superior colour controls for images that sing.



Open in Editor

01 Select your image in the Media Library and click on the Editor button (the last option on the right). Your picture will then open in the Editor. It'll highlight the photo as Edit in Progress and lock it.



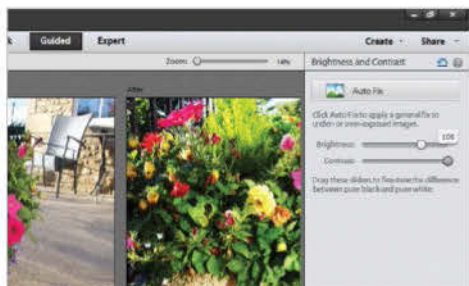
Open Guided mode

02 To open the Guided mode of Elements, click the button at the top. We have chosen to show the before and after of the image in the top tool bar, so we can see the changes we make.



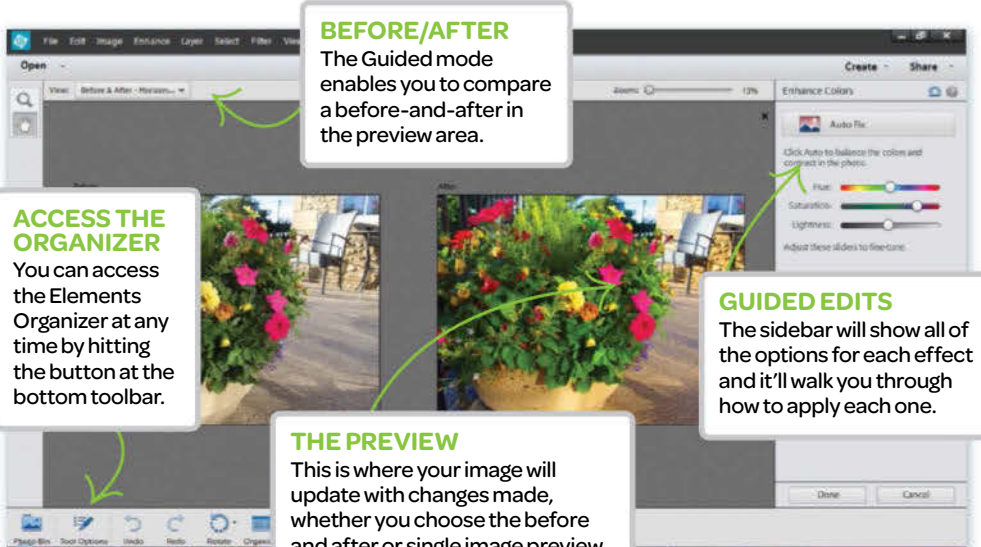
Add an effect

03 In this instance, we will focus on Brightness and Contrast. Click on the Brightness and Contrast option in the sidebar and settings will appear.



Adjust to suit

04 Toggle the options to your liking. Having the Before and After displayed next to each other makes it easy to see the difference. Here we have set the Brightness to 57 and the Contrast to 100 to make the colours in the image pop. Click Done and save your image.



BEFORE/AFTER
The Guided mode enables you to compare a before-and-after in the preview area.

ACCESS THE ORGANIZER
You can access the Elements Organizer at any time by hitting the button at the bottom toolbar.

THE PREVIEW
This is where your image will update with changes made, whether you choose the before and after or single image preview.

GUIDED EDITS
The sidebar will show all of the options for each effect and it'll walk you through how to apply each one.

What does it mean?

MASK – This is a non-destructive way of making a selection. When something is masked, it is hidden from view. An icon in the Layers palette shows the layer mask as a black-and-white thumbnail, where black is hidden and white is visible. You can edit this at any time if you need to make changes.

Source file available

Start files for you to follow the steps



Make simple selections for the perfect cutout

Cutting objects out of their backgrounds is easy when you know which tools to use

Making selections is a key Photoshop task worth learning how to do properly. Selections enable you to remove objects from their backgrounds and insert them into new compositions, which is perfect for editing your snaps.

Photoshop has plenty of tools that are built in to help you do this, and a lot of the hard work is done behind the scenes. You don't need to touch the Pen tool to create a selection, as there are other dedicated commands you can try.

In this set of tutorials, we will be looking at the basic selection tools, how they work and what they can be used for. The first looks in more detail at the Refine Edge dialog, which is a relatively new addition to Photoshop and Photoshop Elements, but it makes once-complex selections, like hair or trees, so much easier. The second is an Elements-only option of how to use the Selection Brush tool, which lets you paint a selection using brushes. Finally, we have a guide to using the Quick Selection tool, whose name says it all!

Technique 1 Refine Edge

Use this command to get the best out of your selections



Expert tip

Color Range

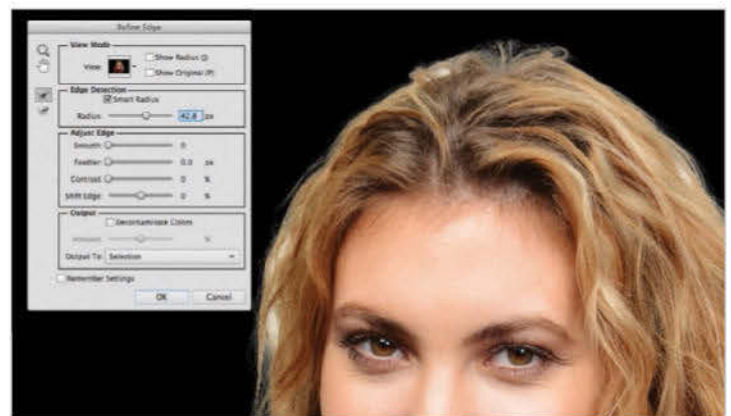
We've used Magic Wand here as it suits our purpose, but Color Range is a much more powerful tool for selecting by colour – it is only available in Photoshop though, not Elements. Go to **Select>Color Range** and use the Add to Sample eyedropper to pick the colour you want to isolate. You can then Add other colours to the selection or Subtract them as needed. The Preview window shows you what you have selected so you can get it right before you exit the tool.

Basic selection

01 First you need to make a rough selection of your main object, in this case our model. We can get away with using the Magic Wand tool here as the background is one colour, so select the tool and click on the background to select it all.

Inverse the selection

02 It was easiest for us to select the background as it is so uniform, but we actually want to select the model. With the selection still active, go to **Select>Inverse** and the selection will flip so that the model is selected instead.

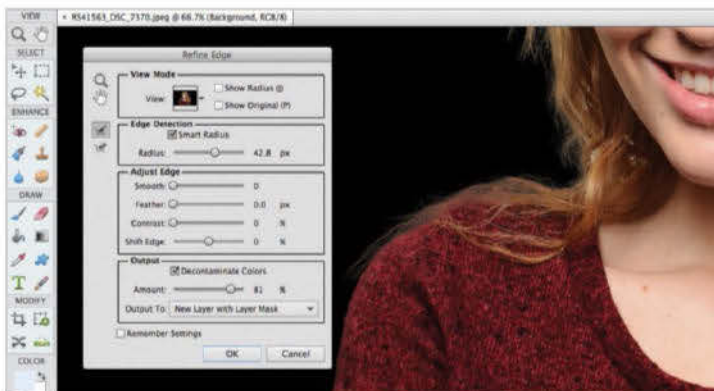


Refine Edge

03 Access the Refine Edge options by using the button in the bottom Tool Options panel, or through the Select menu. The first option in the dialog lets you pick a View mode. We went for On Black as it's easy to see if the white background is showing through.

Edge Detection

04 Increase the Radius (the edge between what's included in the selection and what's not) to include some of the hair we might have missed. Smart Radius tries to adjust the radius to suit your image automatically – not always successfully, although it works well here.



Refine Radius tool

05 You can manually adjust the radius using the Refine Radius tool. Paint the edges of the hair where you need to reveal more strands and watch as Photoshop analyses the area, removes the background and adjusts the selection. If you make a mistake, undo it with the Erase Refinements tool.

Decontaminate Colors

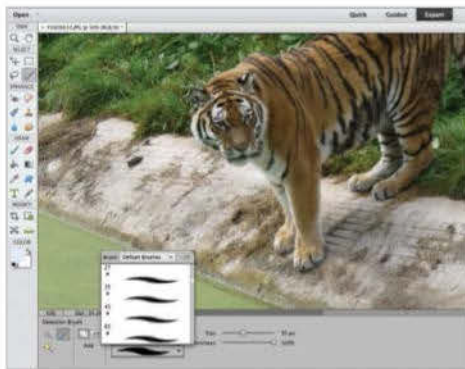
06 In the Output section, select Decontaminate Colors, which gets rid of any fringing around the edges of the hair. You can adjust the strength of this to suit the image. In the Output To options, choose New Layer with Layer Mask.

Technique 2

Selection Brush tool

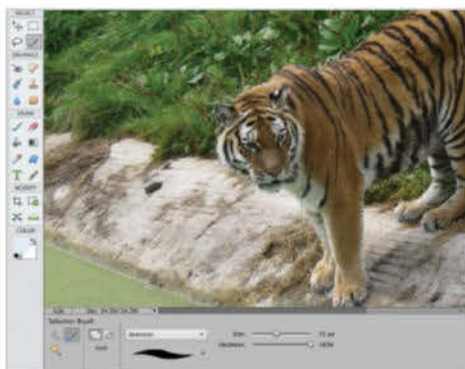
This Elements-only option lets you use brushes to paint in selections

Photoshop Elements has some tools that aren't available in Photoshop and they are designed to make common photo-editing tasks as easy as possible. Hidden alongside the Magic Wand and the Quick Selection tool, the Selection Brush tool is one of these and it enables you to use a brush to paint over the areas that you want to select and view the result as a selection or a mask.



Set the tool

01 Pick the Selection Brush from the toolbar. In the Tool Options panel at the bottom, make sure Selection is chosen and you have Add highlighted. Next, pick the brush you want to use. For something like this tiger, which has soft edges, use a soft brush.



Paint away

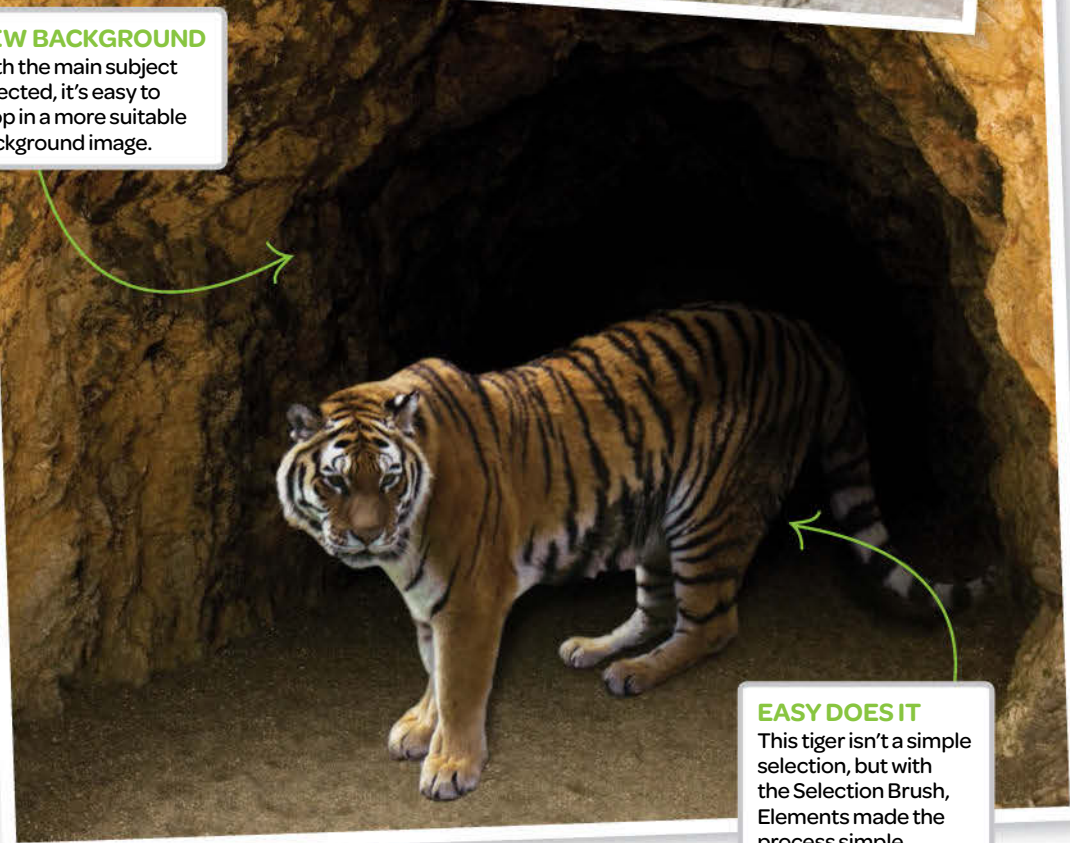
02 You can literally paint over the subject you want to select, just like you would with a normal brush. You will need to alter the brush size as you go; use a larger one to quickly fill in the main bulk and a smaller one as you get near the edge.



Start image

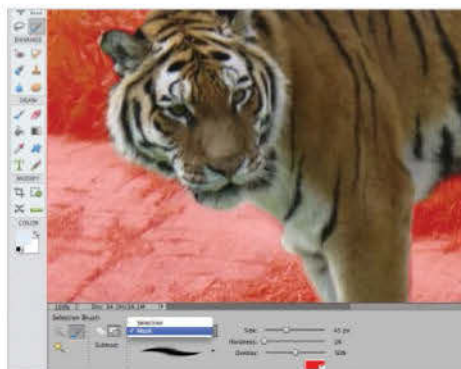
NEW BACKGROUND

With the main subject selected, it's easy to drop in a more suitable background image.



EASY DOES IT

This tiger isn't a simple selection, but with the Selection Brush, Elements made the process simple.



Mask mode

03 Try Mask mode instead of Selection. A mask will appear on your image, with the red areas representing the bits you want to discard. Continue painting the selection, or subtracting from it by picking Subtract, using the mask as your guide until you are happy.



Refine Edge

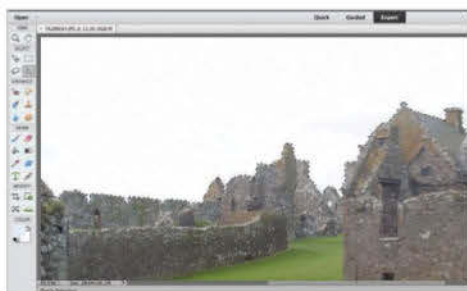
04 Use Refine Edge in a similar way as before. Go to Select>Refine Edge. Pick a View mode, then use the Refine Radius tool to tidy up areas. You might also need to tick Decontaminate Colors to stop any of the original background colour seeping through.

Technique 3

Use Quick Selection

Replace skies quickly with the Quick Selection tool

Quick Selection is the perfect tool for making, well, quick selections. It works best on images where there is a good distinction between the foreground and background, and where there is a uniform colour in the area that you want to select, as there is in our sample image here. It's also an incredibly easy feature to use – you just click and drag for the selection to be pulled in the direction you drag, with the tool automatically detecting the various edges in your image.



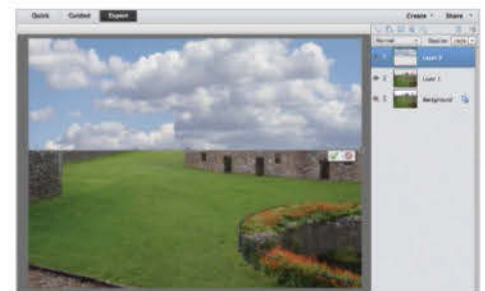
Use the tool

01 Pick the Quick Selection tool. In the Tool Options panel, ensure Add is selected. Click in the top-left corner and drag over the sky. Zoom in and find windows and other areas where the sky shows through. Switch to New Selection and select these too.



Inverse the selection

02 You should have multiple selections showing, highlighting all of the sky. Go to Select>Inverse, which selects the ruins instead. Go to Edit>Copy and then Edit>Paste, to paste the ruins into a new layer.



Add the sky

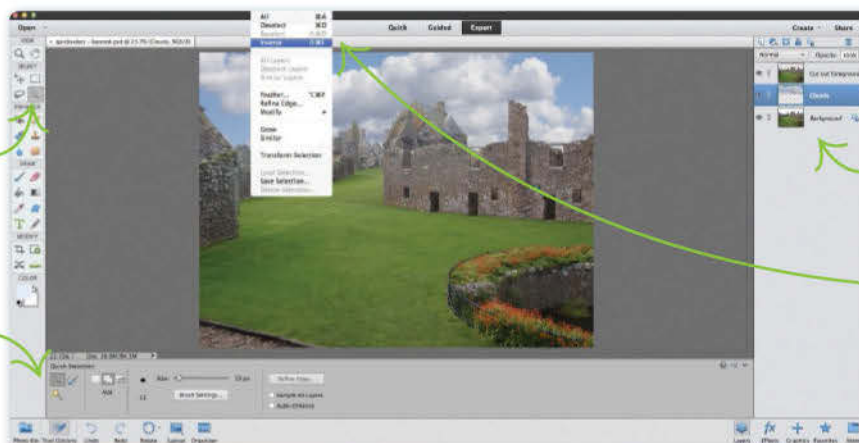
03 Hide your Background layer by clicking on the eye icon. Open a sky image, and copy and paste it into the main image. Hold Shift and drag the corners so it's big enough. Move the sky layer underneath your ruins layer in the Layers palette.

FIND THE TOOL

The Quick Selection tool is grouped with the Magic Wand tool in the main tool bar.

TOOL OPTIONS

From here you can pick the right tool, and choose to Add or Subtract from a selection or start a new one.



SEPARATE LAYERS

When we have isolated the sky, we want the ruins as its own layer before inserting the sky.

SELECT MENU

Use this menu to choose the Inverse option so that we have selected the ruins and not the sky.



Discover the power of the Brush tool

Find out how to paint, erase and retouch with one of Photoshop's finest tools; the Brush

The Brush tool has to be one of the most diverse tools in the entire Photoshop suite, as it's used together with an array of delectable tools as well as on its own. From the Eraser to masking techniques, to Dodge, Burn, retouching and beyond, it really is the bee's knees of the editing toolbox.

Using it on its own requires patience and, like many Photoshop techniques, practise. As with anything artistic, the best advice is to simply experiment. Sticking at a technique is a sure-fire way of

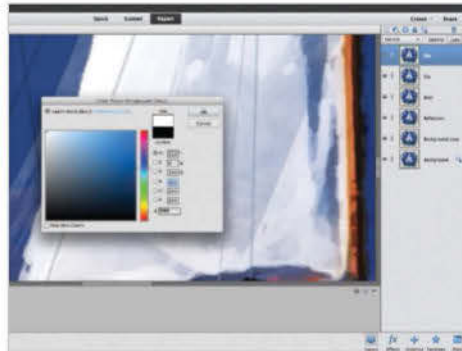
getting better at it, but employing a helping hand in the form of a stylus and tablet offers double assurance of painterly perfection. A stylus and tablet allows you to paint as you would with a paintbrush in real media, except digitally. For the more dedicated of us, it's a worthwhile purchase if you use the Brush tool regularly. Graphics tablets come in the form of the cheap and cheerful to the pricey and professional, so a good spot of researching is advised if you'd like to ditch the mouse and aim for more creative grounds.

Mastering the Brush tool Paint with patience and creativity to build up your layers



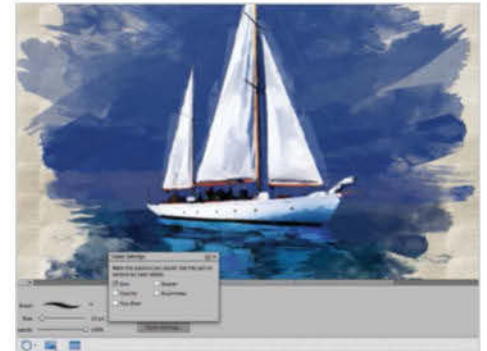
Load a brush

01 An online search will reveal a plethora of brushes. Download to your desktop and, with the Brush tool selected, load the Brush Presets palette. Click the small icon at the top-right of the palette and hit Load Brushes. Navigate to your downloaded brushes to begin.



Build layers

02 Begin painting the sea with an array of blues, building up colours in swirly sea-like movements. For each part of the scene, create a new layer (Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+N). Take your time and zoom in and out.



Using a stylus

03 A graphics tablet enables you to control pen pressure. In the Options bar, mark what you'd like your pen to control. Size allows you to alter the width of your brush tip with the pressure being applied.

More than painting Recreate photographic effects and make selections



Dabs of bokeh

You can create high-end photography effects with dabs of white. Open your image and, on a new layer, lower the Opacity of the Brush. Dab dots of white by clicking once. Repeat your dabs with varying brush sizes, lowering and altering the opacity each time you dab.



Paint selections

The Quick Selection tool is great for cutting out a clean object from its background. With the tool selected, click on the object's background and use the Add to and Subtract from selection icons in the Options bar to adjust. Use the Selection Brush option for trickier outline areas.



Paint spillages

Websites like deviantart.com have an abundance of artists who just wish to share their personal brushes with other artists, and often require no fee. Download your brushes and stamp them around existing text for great, personalised typography effects in minutes.



Brush to retouch

As well as the Clone Stamp and Spot Healing Brush tools, you can use a soft, low-opacity brush to dab away blemishes. Zoom in and hold the Opt/Alt key, and then click on a nearby colour to the offending area. Now dab onto the blemish to form digital make-up.

Trim with the Crop tool

Discover a world of possibility within the most basic of tools in Photoshop

For most Photoshop users, the Crop tool is possibly the simplest tool of all, used only at the end of an edit to tidy everything up. But as is the case with so many of Photoshop's most fundamental features, there's a good amount of artistic flair that can be unlocked with simple picture shaping.

Cropping doesn't just get rid of excess space from your image; it helps create a focal point, it can change perspective in a piece, and it can subliminally shift a viewer's eyes to what's important. It really is a subtle yet powerful way to improve a picture – it only takes a couple of clicks – and it's one of the easiest things to do with Photoshop, thanks to the helpful grids, overlays and exact ratios.

So while it's the case that most beginners will only crop their photos by eye, there are more accurate ways to make sure your picture is geometrically perfect, with features you might not even know existed. Here are some tips and tricks that will change the way you think about cropping, to help you frame your work just as a photographer would. After all, the better your crop, the more focused your image!

What does it mean?

THE GOLDEN RATIO – This was historically used by artists as an aesthetically pleasing fraction. By cropping so that the focus of a picture falls within the Golden Section, you can create a more beautiful piece: classic paintings and wonders of the world have all been created with it in mind.

ALTER PERSPECTIVE

Use the Crop tool to quickly alter the perspective of an image.

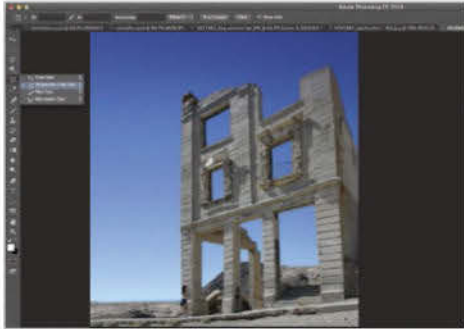
Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

Start image



The Perspective Crop Warp the angle of a photo to give it a new spin



Select options

01 Firstly, select the Perspective Crop tool from the same place as the normal Crop and identify which perspective you actually want to change: it can't be too steep an angle to edit, otherwise the picture will just be stretched.



Set the markers

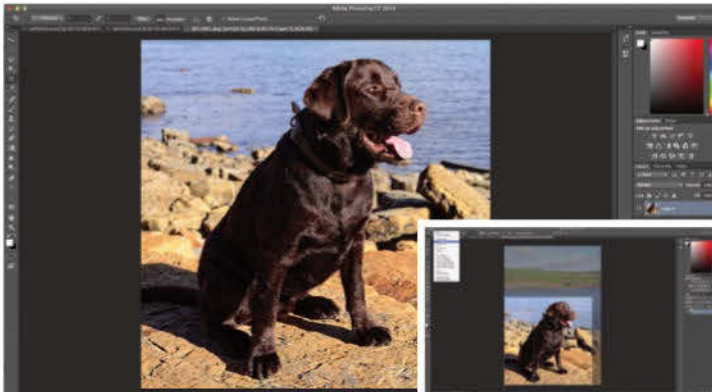
02 Choose what you'd like to give perspective to by drawing around it with the four markers. Remember that the edges of your crop selection will form the edges of your picture, so line up exactly what you want to be left with: the overlay grid can also help with this!



And now crop

03 Simply double-click to crop, just as you would normally. If you wish to resize the image, use the resize buttons across the lengths of the crop selection and not the corners, as this will keep the aspect ratio of the shape.

Other crop options More features and shortcuts to make cropping even easier



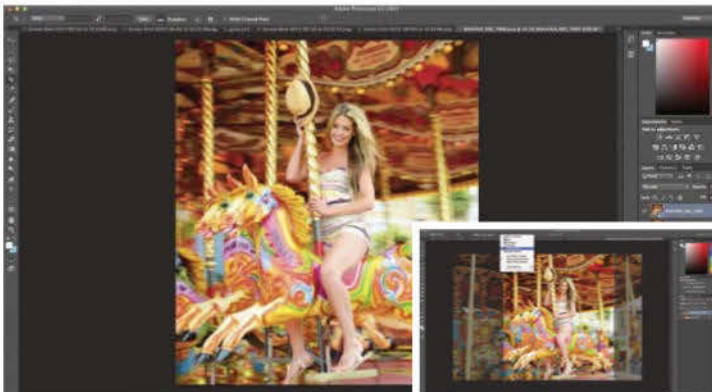
Ratio

It can be a nightmare measuring the exact size you want a photo to be, but thankfully there's a ratio selection across the top bar with common proportions to pick from, along with custom sizing. No need to paste photos of specific sizes into your picture and crop around them!



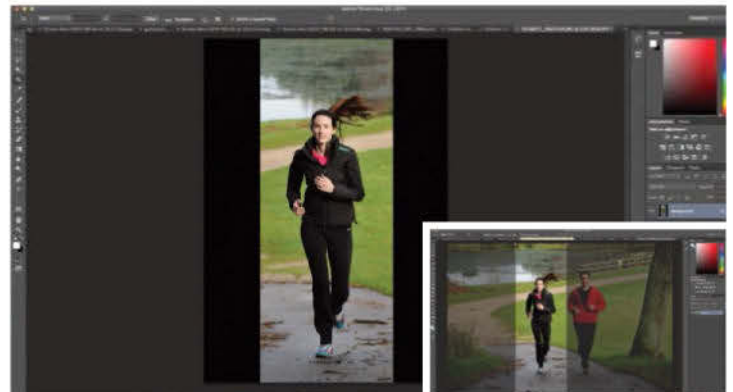
Straighten

Rotating the crop selection can help level out a photo, but you can get a precise measurement of how many degrees you are out, just by using the Straighten tool. It lines up your horizon so that it's parallel to the edges and it only takes a couple of clicks.



Grids

Grids are particularly useful to photographers, you can change the crop grid, whether you're looking for a golden ratio or you just prefer to focus with diagonal lines. These grids can make it easier to focus on a single subject in the centre of a piece.



Delete cropped pixels

If you want to permanently remove the section of your photo that hasn't been cropped, there's an option for that, too. This was introduced in Photoshop CS6, and enables users to tick the box depending on whether they want to delete the surrounding image for good or not.

CLONED OUT

Remove unwanted areas easily by using basic settings.

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

Conquer the Clone Stamp tool

Stamp your authority all over an image with this intelligent brush

Cloning is one of the most time-consuming, patience-testing tricks that you can master in Photoshop, but like most things that require skill and effort, the results can be absolutely stunning.

Cloning is often used as a touch-up tool for photos, as it brushes over an image, using the original as a basis. It relies on the Opt/Alt key; press on whatever you want to be your guide, and then brush away, replacing an area with another part of a photo. It can be used to heal blemishes or even just face-swap. It's simple enough to learn,

but there can be hours spent touching up your photos once you've mastered how to use the stamp.

Sure, it might take so much precision that you wonder halfway through: would it be quicker to just set this sheep free from the field, and photograph it again without the fence in the way? However, in the end, there are few things more satisfying in Photoshop than completing a masterful clone. Read on and learn some techniques and ideas to turn you into a cloning pro.

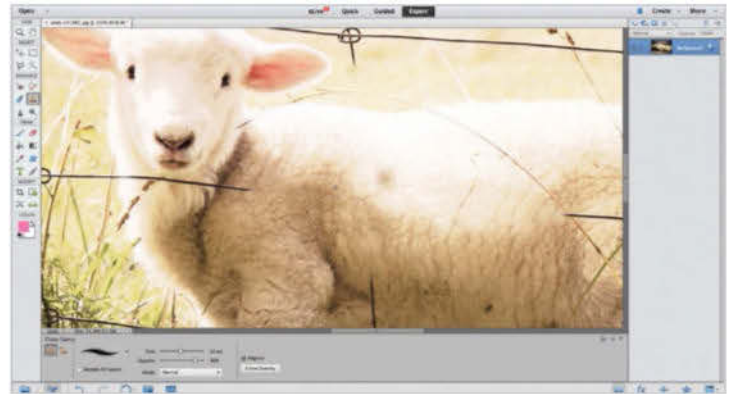


Start image

What does it mean?

THE CLONE OVERLAY – This shows you what and where you are cloning. The best features to consider are the Clipped option, which can display the whole image or just the patch you're cloning, and the Invert option, which can be used for clearer visibility. Try each of the settings and see what works for you.

Cleanly delete obstructions Erase fencing and more by cloning it out

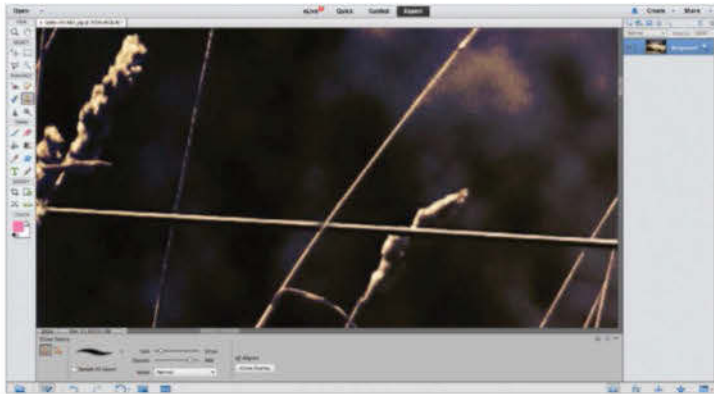


Familiarise yourself with settings

01 Along the bottom are the basic settings for the Clone Stamp. You can change the Brush, Size and Hardness, and there's an option to align or clone in a new place every time. Choose 50% Opacity and a soft brush. This will allow you to touch up and be more accurate.

Begin cloning

02 Press Opt/Alt+click to select the patch you want to duplicate. Then simply brush over your chosen area. It really is that simple, but remember to choose an area of a similar tone and colour, so you don't create a jarring between the clone and the destination.



Clone strands

03 When cloning strands like hair or grass, make sure you clone them specifically rather than cloning around them. Never clone up to the edge of subjects or strands, because then you create soft and unbelievable edges – clone real edges instead.



Watch for duplication

04 To clone believably, make sure you don't leave obviously cloned parts of the image alongside where they've been cloned. If you've cloned a patch, clone over the original spot, otherwise the effect becomes obvious.

Additional uses Create a composite with the Clone tool



Clone whole forests

Trees can be hard to select, but why let that stop you creating a forest? Simply clone one tree all over the picture by adding a new layer for each one. Then you can touch up using the Refine Edge tool.



Swap fur texture

You can clone between pictures. Simply set the Opt/Alt option on one picture and then clone it onto your destination. Lower your opacity and you can create incredible effects, just like this fur swap.



Novelty effects

Rather than duplicating a photo, set a mask and brush through the mask. Then clone with a big soft brush and you can create quick yet effective novelty features, just like the Bohemian Rhapsody-style image we have done here!

GO FOR BLOCKS

Use the Magic Wand to pick out blocks of colour and your selections will be quick and effortless.

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied file.

Start image

Wield the Magic Wand tool

Know when to use the simplest of tools, and select with ease

On the surface, the Magic Wand is one of the most intuitive tools that Photoshop or Elements can offer; the clue is in the name. We expect it to just know exactly what we want selected.

The reality is that many find the Magic Wand doesn't offer much flexibility. Most people prefer the Quick Selection or a Lasso, and the Wand gets ignored. Is it too simple for complex selecting jobs?

The trick is to match the tool to the right situation. What the Magic Wand does perfectly is select a block of colour. It's even quicker than

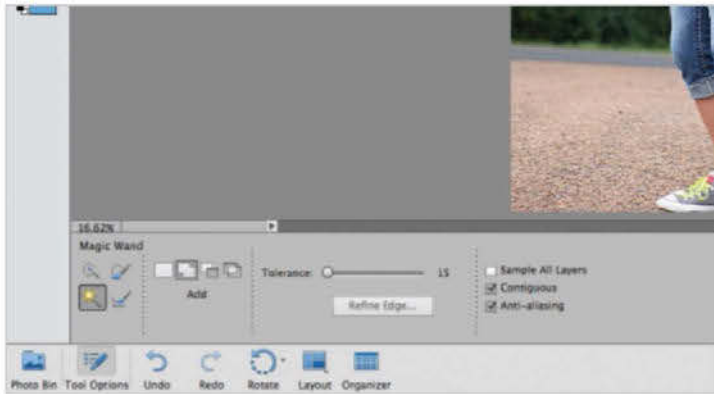
a Quick Selection if you want to locate a certain shade in a picture, and by understanding how to set the Tolerance, you can learn to select even more or less than ever before. You'll be surprised at how accurate such a speedy tool can be.

The Magic Wand is often just the beginning of an editing process. It's the starting point for a big subject selection, or it's a marker to search for similar colours in a picture. Let's look at the basics of the tool, and find out exactly what the Magic Wand can conjure up.

What does it mean?

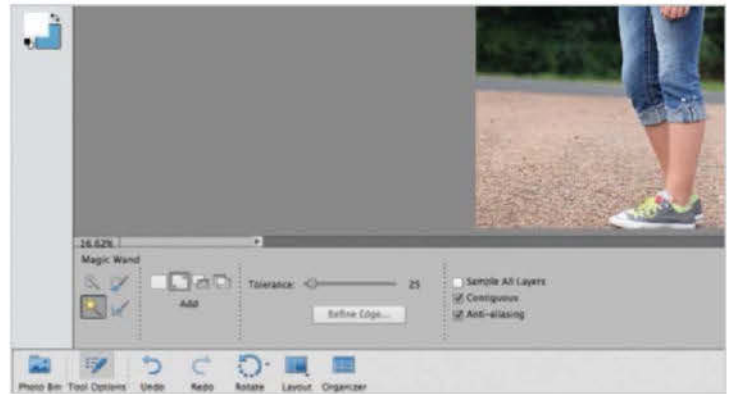
CONGTIGUOUS – When this box is checked, it only selects pixels situated next to each other, to create a shape of selection. When the Contiguous box is unchecked, the Magic Wand selects all particular shades similar to the one you're selecting, across the picture, rather like the Color Range tool.

Select by magic Make or prime the perfect selection with the Magic Wand



Select the tool

01 Select the Magic Wand tool from the icon on the left-hand side of Elements, or Photoshop if you're using it. Make sure you tick Contiguous and Anti-alias before you start selecting. Decide on what you want to select; the Magic Wand works best on block colours.



Set the Tolerance

02 Tolerance refers to how your selection reacts to the colours around it. If the Tolerance is low, the Magic Wand will select specific shades of colour; if the Tolerance is high, it will select similar colours around the selection. Set a low Tolerance for accuracy.



Point and click

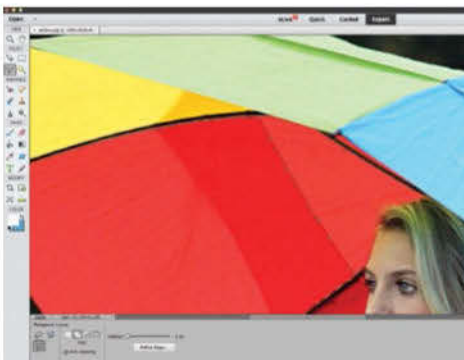
03 Simply click on the object you wish to select in the picture: it really is that easy! The Magic Wand works best when there's a specific colour that you wish to select, as opposed to the Quick Selection tool that selects whole objects, but neither tool is perfect.



Add and subtract

04 Use the Add and Subtract icons at the bottom of the screen to perfect the selection you have made. They are useful for selecting similar shades so that you can get the shape of an object rather than just the main colour of it.

Work with the Wand Which other selection tools can I use with the Magic Wand?



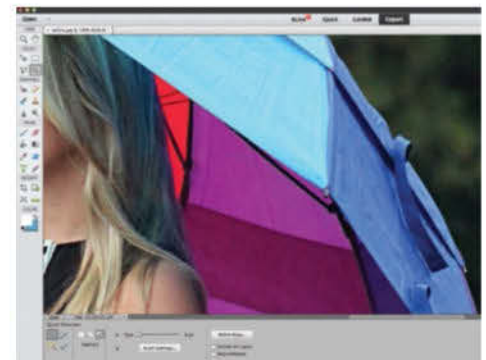
Lassos

Use the Magic Wand for the bulk of the selecting, but there are more accurate tools that can finish a job. Navigating the Lassos, for example, all the way around a shape can be arduous, but by using the Wand first, you need only touch the edges!



Selection Brush

The Selection Brush is just as good at covering the corners that the Magic Wand missed out. Simply select the width that you'd like, and use it as you would any other brush to either add or subtract to the selection.



Quick Selection

The Quick Selection tool might be imprecise when you're in a hurry, but that doesn't mean it isn't great to improve a selection you've made with the Magic Wand. Use it the same way; just drag to add or subtract more to the selection.

Source file available

Learn this technique
using the supplied files

What does it mean?

FEATHER – Feathering is leaving a soft edge around a selection. This option is available when you use the Refine Edge tool, but also when you make a simple selection. It's great as it softens your whole subject automatically, but it's no substitute for editing the edges of a selection manually.

Try out the Refine Selection Brush

Improve your selections with ease and precision
using a very simple brush tool

A composition is only as good as the source pictures you use, and if you've isolated a subject or object to use in a composition, it will only look as good as the selection you've made. This is why it's important to always make the perfect selection, and there are numerous ways to refine an edge.

For any beginner just starting to learn Elements, though, it might seem a bit daunting to try and engineer the Refine Edge tool, working out what all the sliders mean and how they work; they're actually a mystery to quite a lot of experienced users! The Refine Selection

Brush, however, enables you to perfect your selections with the simplicity of brushing.

It's the same as any refine tool; you can add to your selection, remove elements and neaten the edges, only it's a manual feature that can give you more power than the Refine Edge feature.

If you learn to select perfect edges, there's literally no end to what you can achieve in Photoshop or Elements. A well-refined subject will look great in any composition, so check out our four-step guide, and discover this useful trick now.



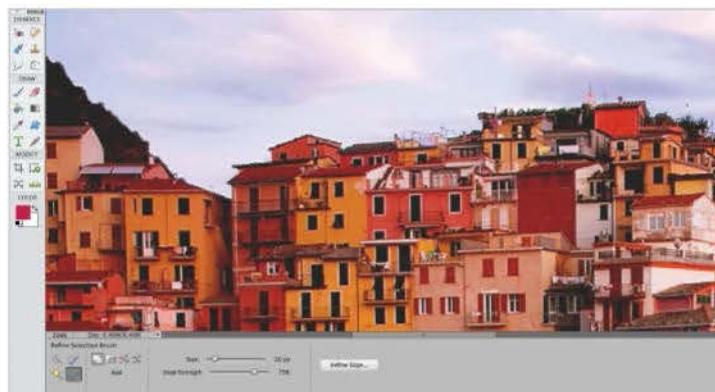
Brush up on selections

Perfect and refine your edges as you brush



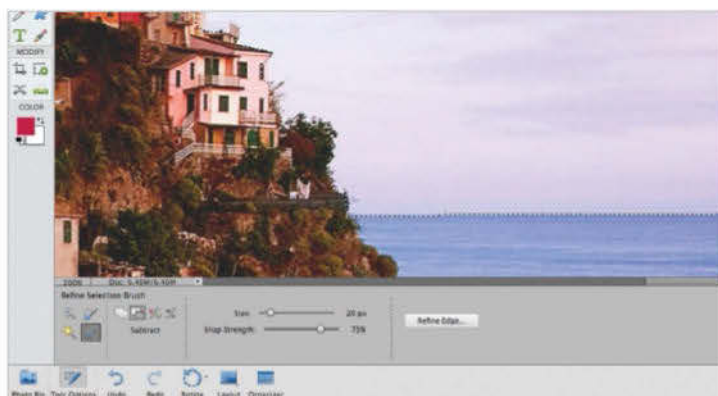
Make a basic selection

01 The Refine Selection brush edits the edges of something you've already selected, so while it is possible to select with it, it's more a tool to use after the selection is made. Start off by grabbing the Quick Selection tool, and making a rough selection ready to refine.



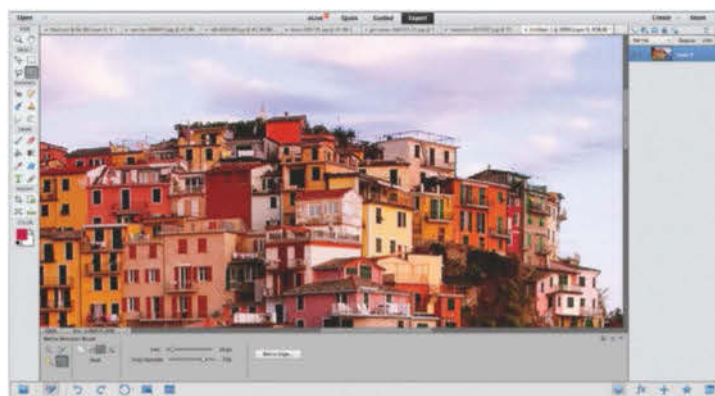
Add to the selection

02 Click on the Add icon and then brush over all the elements of the picture that you want to include in your final selection. You can always use the [and] keys as you would with an ordinary brush to resize the tip.



Remove from the selection

03 Select the Remove icon, and the '+' symbol will be replaced with a '-'. This means you can use it to lightly erase any edges that you've overrun slightly with your brush, touching up your selection in the more obvious areas.

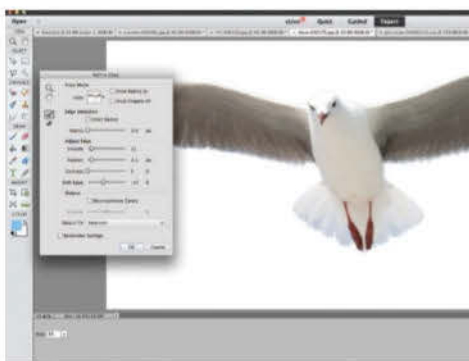


Push/Smooth

04 Finally, before you finish off with a light Refine Edge, use the Push icon to just touch up the edges either side of your selection. The Smooth tool can be used to snap the selection to the picture further. Then click the Refine Edge box on the bottom panel.

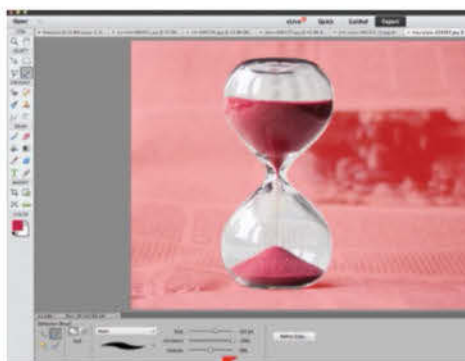
Other refining tools

Have more control over your selections with these options



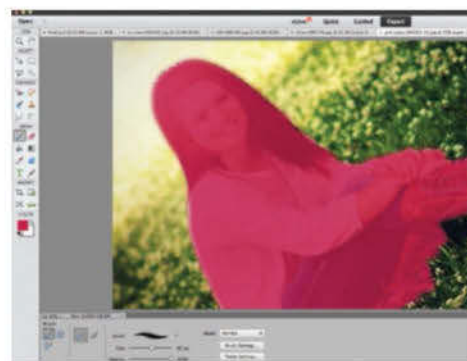
Refine Edge

A must-use for every selection, Ctrl/right-click and select Refine Edge to perfect the edges of any selection. Be sure to add a Feather of 2px, Shift Edge by up to 20% and Smooth by 11 before you stroke over your edges.



Selection Brush

The Selection Brush is used to make the selections you later refine. This doesn't mean that you can't refine the edges with this brush, though, which performs more like a masking effect than a selection tool.

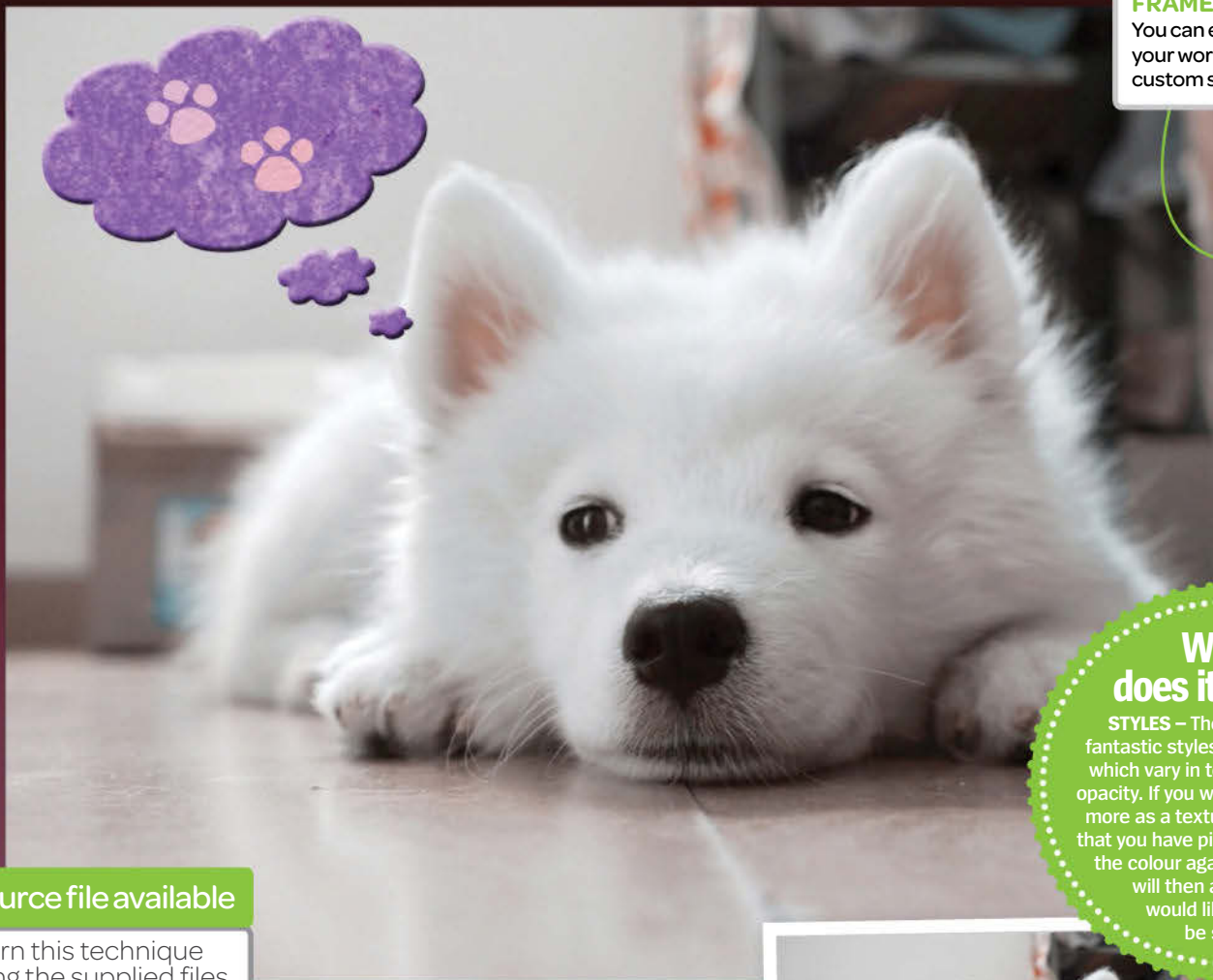


Regular Brush

Try this trick: create a new layer, turn Opacity down to 80% and brush over your selection using any brush of any size or hardness. Cmd/Ctrl+click this layer preview to select these pixels, then click on your original layer.

FRAME

You can even frame your work with some custom shapes.



Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

What does it mean?

STYLES – There are so many fantastic styles that you can use, which vary in texture, colour and opacity. If you would like to use one more as a texture over the colour that you have picked, simply select the colour again, and Elements will then ask you if you would like the fill to be shown.



Make shapes with the Shape tool

Use the most basic of shapes in order to transform pictures into montages and much more

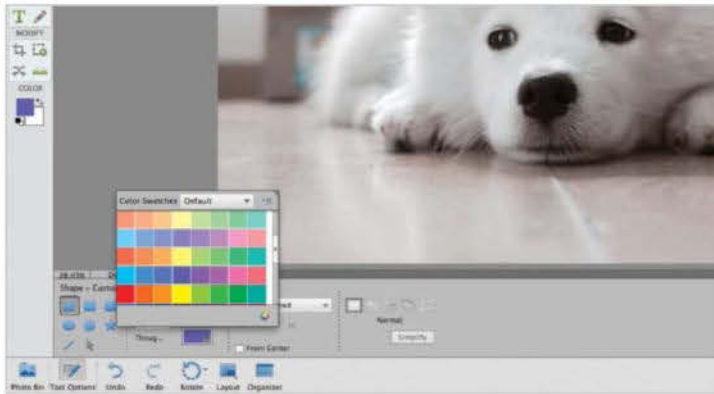
There are so many ways to create shapes in Photoshop and Elements, but are you overlooking the Shape tool, in favour of brushes, the Pen tool or even filling in selections?

The Custom Shape tool is in fact the most perfect option for creating cartoony speech bubbles, frames and even animal silhouettes, as any shape is completely editable and customisable with just a few clicks. There's a whole range of great styles to choose from, and you can even choose a defined size or proportion to your shapes by clicking a few boxes.

From there, it's just a matter of your own creativity. You can use them to give a picture a frame; you can embellish pictures with silhouettes of things like flowers or animals; or you can even use the outlined shapes, and fill/brush colour into them. They're perfect for adding into drawings and cartoons, but you might choose to mix them with reality for extra effect.

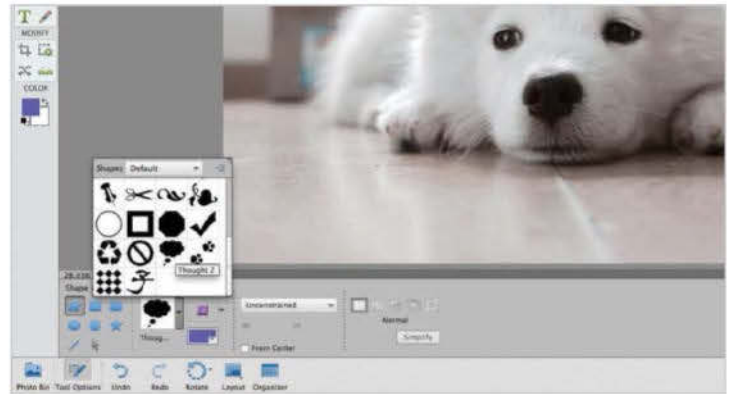
Let's have a look at the basics of custom shapes, and work out how to create them. Remember to experiment with the shapes that you discover and create your own compositions.

Apply the shapes Learn how to create cool effects with shapes



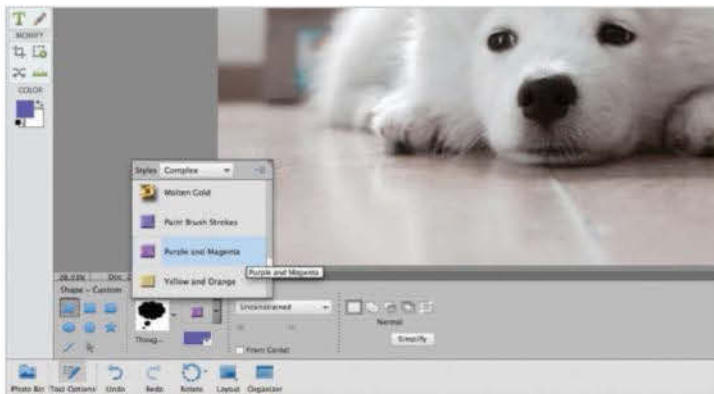
Pick your colour

01 Start off by going to Shapes on the left-hand side, and choosing the shape that you want to create. We're going to explore the custom options, so click the appropriate icon. Pick the colour you want to start creating with from the drop-down box.



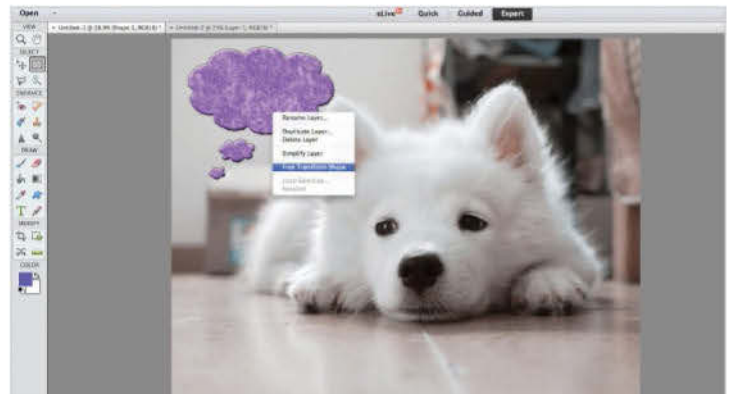
Choose a shape

02 Click on the icon of the shape you're currently using. There's another drop-down menu to choose other types of shapes, ranging from animal-related to speech bubbles. We're going to choose a thought bubble for this tutorial.



Create and pick a style

03 Add your shape by dragging it into your picture. Now with your shape created, you can add a style to it, and again, there are loads of great options in the drop-down menu, depending on the look and feel you want to give your picture.



Choose Free Transform

04 Ctrl/right-click and choose Free Transform Shape. You can move or flip this shape however you like now, so feel free to go back into the style and colour options to experiment. Click the tick icon to accept the transform and then repeat if you want more shapes.

Pick of the polygons Which are the most useful custom shapes?



Talk bubbles

Create cool cartoon images by going to Filter> Pixelate>Color Halftone, and use custom shapes to add speech bubbles. Create comic strips packed with dialog from here; how many custom shapes can you fit into your story?



Musical notes

Let musical notes flow through any picture with these shapes. You might want to place them over a picture of a musician or instrument, or even use them on a picture of some lined paper to create your own written music.



Frames

A frame can finish off a picture, but it can also be the inspiration for a quirky composition. Mask your own photos behind a selection of custom frames, and scatter them over a background to create a living-room wall.

What does it mean?

RANGE – The Range option determines which areas are going to be darkened. Choosing the Midtones – the default option – basically means that the picture as a whole gets darkened. By choosing Highlights and Shadows, though, you can be more precise with the areas to darken.

DODGE

Dodge slightly over the eyes, just to bring out the rest of the darkened effect.

Burn tool basics

Add darkness and saturation in controlled measures, just by using a simple, brush-like tool

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

The **Burn tool** is one of a pair. With dodging and burning, you can add perfect contrast to any photo, even digital paintings, by brushing over the areas you want to improve. You've probably used them one after the next; the Dodge tool to lighten and the Burn tool to darken, but can they be used apart?

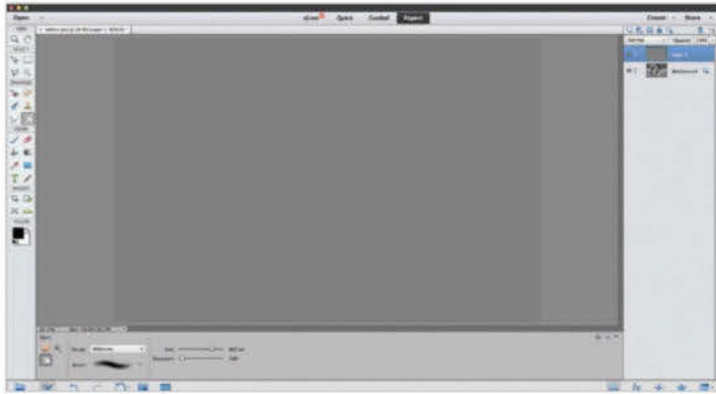
The Dodge tool is a must-use in many photo fixes; it can correct the whites of eyes, yellowy teeth, and even just give a shine to an object. The Burn tool, however, is perhaps less used. It darkens pictures, applies a bit of colour to a dark area, and can be used to create HDR-style finishes, make subjects stand out from their backgrounds, and even give a vignette to a picture. It's just as versatile as the Dodge tool, and it's a simple feature that can be used in almost any kind of picture.

But how can you get the best out of this simple tool? Let's take a look at the basics of the Burn, and a few instances in which you can apply it.



Apply the Burn tool

Apply dark shades in controlled areas by brushing



Create a grey layer

01 To edit non-destructively, create a new layer to burn on, rather than burning the actual photo itself. Fill your new layer in with a neutral grey colour #808080 and set this layer to Overlay. Now, any burning will show up on the layer below, but won't edit directly onto it.



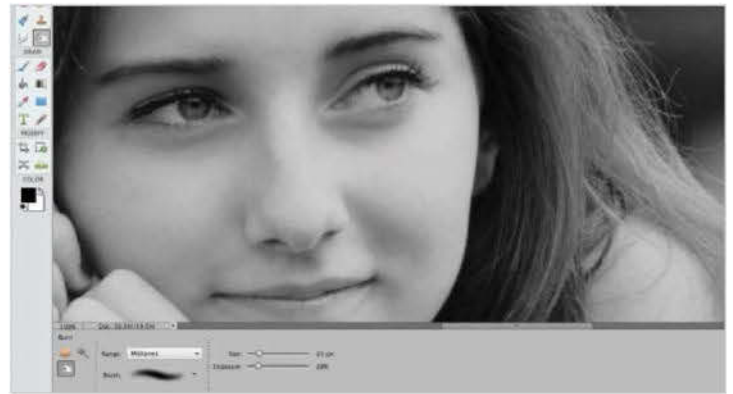
Adjust settings

02 Get familiar with the Burn settings by experimenting with the brushes and the hardness settings, as well as the Range and Exposure of the tool. The lower the Exposure, the more subtle the effect, so pick between 10-20%, and set the Range to Midtones.



Think about your strokes

03 When using a large brush, it's okay to raise the Exposure, but be careful not to make multiple strokes, one over the next. This will mean that you'll have patches of differing darkness that will stick out in the final piece.



Add finer details

04 Use a smaller brush and a low Exposure for the fine details. In a portrait, be sure to burn over the eyebrows, the space between the eyebrows and the eyelids, and parts of the hair. Don't burn over lines on the face, as this can make a subject look aged and wrinkled.

Additional uses

When else does the Burn tool come in handy?



Bring out colour

The Burn tool is great for darkening, but it also saturates a picture. By using the same neutral grey layer technique, try burning over bright skies in your picture to reveal more colour and give them a bit of vibrancy.



Make subjects pop

Darkening and shading is a standard technique used by artists for making other things stand out and for adding contrast. Apply a burn all over a picture, except for over a subject, to make people stand out from their backgrounds.



Add a vignette

Vignettes can give a classic effect and draw attention to the centre of your pictures, simply by adding darkness to the edges. Add your neutral grey layer and burn around the outside of your picture to create one in a hurry.

NO BACKGROUND

Both the Background and Magic Eraser tools make light work of removing unwanted areas of an image.



Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

Understand the Eraser tools

Discover how to efficiently remove areas from an image using the tools in Elements

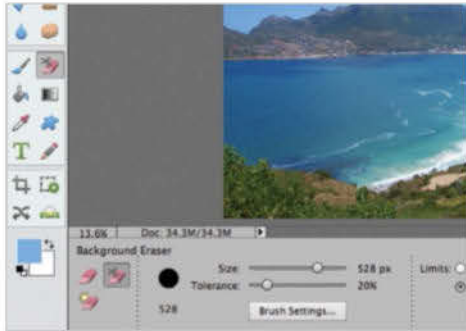
The Eraser tool in Photoshop Elements is extremely useful when it comes to removing objects or background sections from an image. There are three options to choose from when it comes to the Eraser tool in Elements: the standard Eraser, the Background Eraser and the enticingly-named Magic Eraser.

The basic Eraser tool is great if you don't need to worry about keeping the edges of a subject perfectly intact, but for more complex edits the Background Eraser does exactly as its name suggests. It erases the coloured pixels and turns them into transparent ones, and deletes the background of your image whilst leaving the

foreground untouched. This tool works best when there is a notable contrast between the foreground and background colours.

The Magic Eraser tool is slightly different, however, as it erases all colours within a set tolerance. It is essentially the same as using the Magic Wand tool to highlight a specific area and hitting the delete button. You also do not need to drag the brush tip like you would with the Background Eraser tool. Individually clicking will enable more control and cleaner edges. Check out the following steps to learn how to use both the Background Eraser and the Magic Eraser tools to selectively erase the skyline of the landscape image supplied.

Remove your background Use the Background Eraser tool to delete a skyline



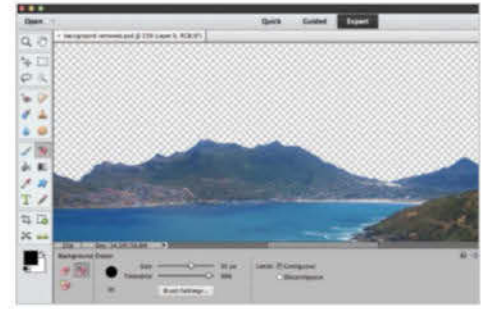
Select the right tool

01 Once you load the image into Elements, choose Expert from the top menu bar. From the Draw section in the toolbox, pick the Eraser. Then, find Tool Options in the bottom left-hand corner and click on the Background Eraser tool.



Start your adjustments

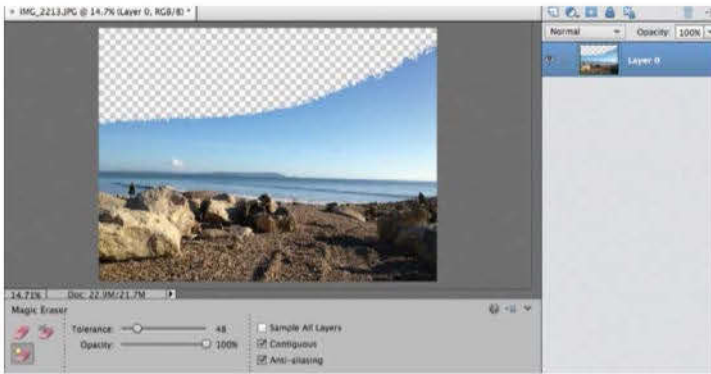
02 Before clicking on the image, first set up your brush. We recommend choosing a brush Size of 500px or above, setting Tolerance to 20% and set Limits to Discontinuous. To make a line of where you wish the eraser to start, click and drag the brush tip along the outline of the mountains.



Finish up

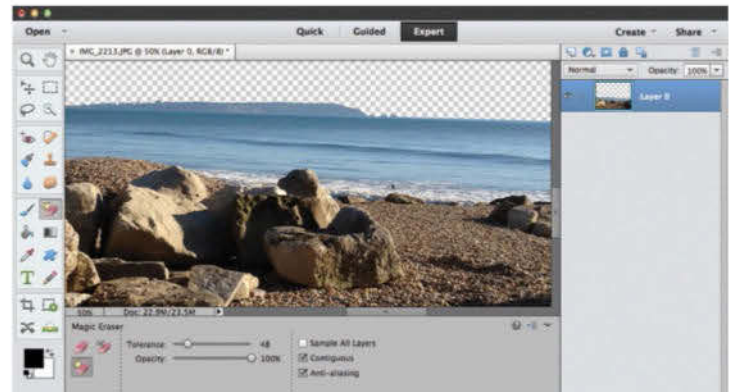
03 Once you have the initial outline, go to delete the rest of the sky. You may see that there are some areas that still have blue sky or clouds remaining. For this, zoom in on the picture, set your brush's Size to 95, and Tolerance to 90% before dragging the brush tip along the outline of the mountains.

Magic Eraser options Learn how to master the Magic Eraser



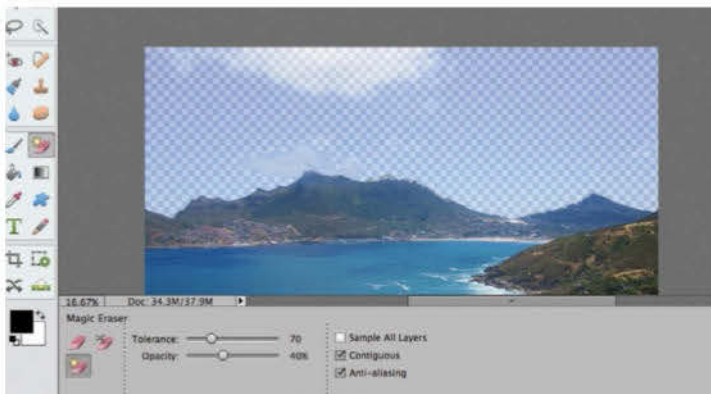
Points to remember

Once you click on your photo with the Magic Eraser tool, it changes the Background layer to a regular one which is unlocked. If you choose Contiguous from the Options bar, the colour has to be touching the colour that you click on to be affected. If you do not choose it, every colour in the image that is the same will be erased.



Anti-alias options

This is automatically checked before beginning. To make the area look more natural, keep it checked as it creates a slightly softer edge around the transparent area. When you add a new background, it will help it to look like it is meant to be there.



Change the Opacity

This defines exactly how strong the Eraser tool is. Setting the Opacity to 100% will erase all the pixels for complete transparency. Vary the Opacity to get a rougher outcome if you'd like the more 'by-hand' effect, and would like to add a filter to your image at the end.



Remove clouds

To just remove certain areas like clouds, the Magic Eraser tool is great as it only deletes pixels with similar colours. Once this is done, switch to the Content-Aware Move tool and choose a similar area of sky to copy and paste, effectively creating a clear blue sky.

What does it mean?

EDGE FIDELITY – The Cutout filter has the power to reduce your image to low-poly blocks, but the Edge Fidelity slider can inject more detail into the edges. Choose a setting between 1 and 3, and experiment with how the Cutout deals with certain objects; it can make text legible, or reduce it to scribbles.

ART EFFECTS

The Cutout filter is ideal for illustration, whatever your skill.

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

Use the Cutout filter creatively

It's a simple command, but great for illustrative effects

So many of the filters that you find in the Filter Gallery are, on first glance at least, one-dimensional. Turning photos into sketches or swapping reality for paint daubs might seem like tricks that you'll never use, but the Filter Gallery options can be used imaginatively.

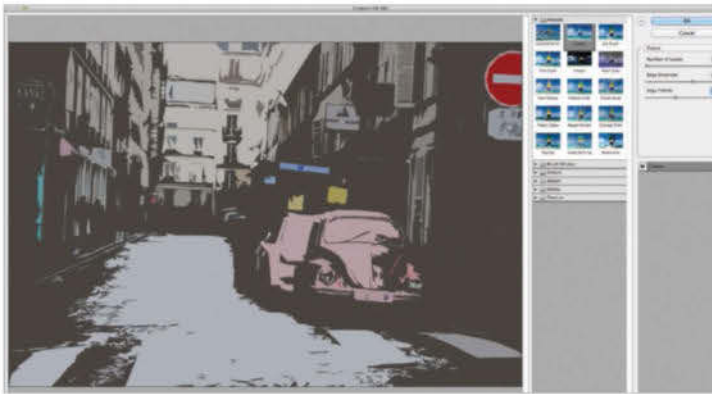
Take the Cutout filter, for example. It may look like a simple feature to create low-poly art, but it's a tool that you can use to create really cool posters. While most advanced users of Photoshop rely on the Pen tool to make pin-point drawings and convert their pictures to

cartoons, the Cutout tool can do it in a single click. You can make detailed pictures or blocked cartoons; there's a lot of scope to be creative. But how can you get the most out of this simple filter? By making compositions, of course, consisting of different layers with different levels of the Cutout filter applied. Worried that it sounds complicated? It's easier than you think! Check out our short tutorial on how to create this classy poster – you'll never see the Filter Gallery in the same light again.



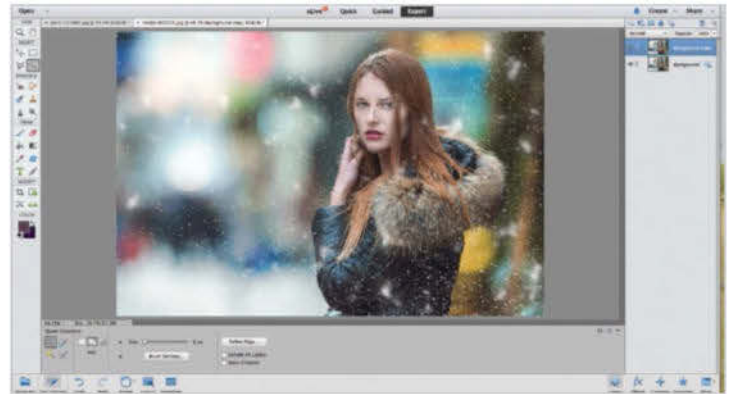
Composite and Cutout

Use the Cutout on two pictures, and combine the best of both



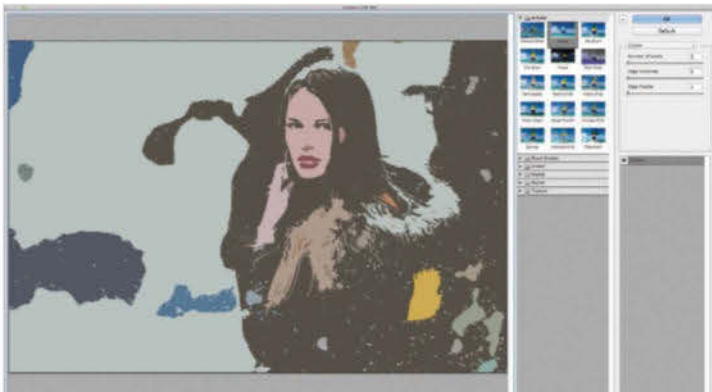
Set the background

01 First, we're going to deal with the background. Simply head to Filter>Filter Gallery>Artistic, and go to the Cutout option. We want the background to be low in detail, to draw the attention to the subject, so use Levels: 2, Simplicity: 6 and Fidelity: 2.



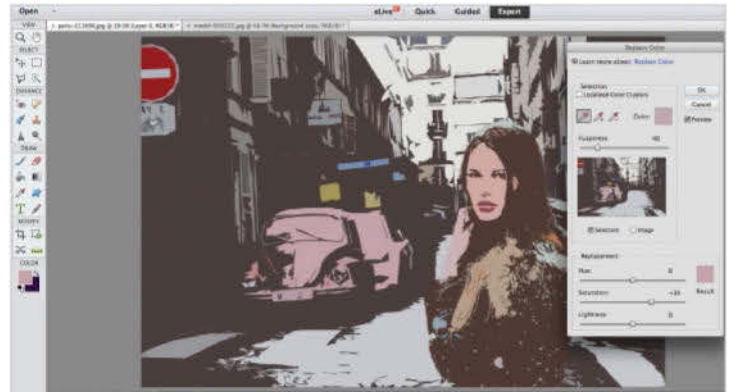
Select the subject

02 Open the subject as a new file if it makes it easier. Select the subject using a Quick Selection. Ctrl/right-click and then choose the Refine Edge option to iron out any edges – don't worry too much about this, though.



Mask and Cutout

03 Click the Mask icon, and go to Filter>Filter Gallery. Choose Cutout again and use Levels: 2, Simplicity: 0 and Fidelity: 2 for more detail than before. With the mask in place, only the subject will be cut out, and the background will be invisible.

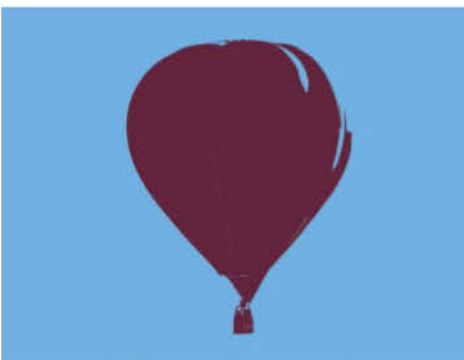


Combine them

04 Duplicate your layer of the original document by Ctrl/right-clicking. Position your subject and go to Enhance>Adjust Color to change the colour if you want. You can adjust everything as a whole on a layer with Hue/Saturation and individual shades with Replace Color.

Additional uses

Cutouts can be used in all kinds of projects...



Create thresholds

Use the Cutout on pictures with the lowest simplicity possible, and you'll most likely be left with two colours, possibly three. These two or three-colour pictures look classy, and can make great posters on their own.



Give HDR toning

If you want to apply dark and light shades over the top of your picture, but don't want to manually brush them, duplicate your image and use a Cutout. Lower the opacity and change the blend mode to Soft Light for an HDR effect.



Mix cartoon

Create intriguing compositions by selecting your subject, duplicating to a new layer and applying Cutout to the background. This blurs cartoons and reality; or why not blur Cutouts with traditional cartoons or line drawings?

Source file available

Learn this technique
using the supplied files

What does it mean?

PRESERVE DETAILS – The Preserve Details slider in the Reduce Noise filter is there for keeping sharpness in parts of the picture. Most of the time, the filter can distinguish details from noise, but it isn't always accurate. Reduce Details to 0%, and mask your original layer into the photo to bring out details.

Master the Reduce Noise filter

Don't fall foul of low-light maladies; eliminate noise in your pictures and smooth things out with this filter

Even the best photographer has images stashed away that suffer from a **severe bout of noise**. The dreaded grainy effect can be unavoidable in some situations, primarily low-light or night shots, and it can taint an otherwise perfect picture.

Fortunately though, you don't have to put up with noise in your photos, because Elements offers a tool that can remove it. The Reduce Noise filter is designed for smoothing over the unsightly, overly-sharp fragments of colour that can appear at the edges of overexposed or low-resolution images. It's a quick fix, but a powerful

one, and an edit you can apply to a whole host of photos just to give them a slight patch-up.

But for optimum results, the Reduce Noise filter works best if you combine it with a slight blurring. It's a useful filter on its own, but like so many features in Photoshop and Elements, there's no end to the potential of the Reduce Noise filter if you know how to harness it well. By editing non-destructively and sharpening the picture again with the original layer, you have the perfect noise removal system. Read on to find out how it's done.

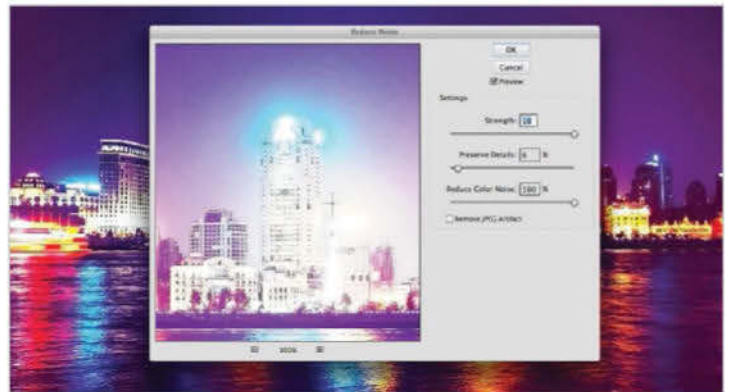
Start image

Banish the noise Combine this filter with a blur and a mask



Duplicate your layer

01 To edit non-destructively, it's always a good idea to duplicate your original layer. In this case though, we're going to make some drastic changes to the picture, so we definitely need to save the original layer to bring details back into the edited layer.



Find Reduce Noise

02 On your duplicate layer, go to Filter>Noise>Reduce Noise. We've gone for the highest possible Strength and Reduce Color Noise settings. Don't worry too much about preserving details, as we're going to do that with the original layer.



Blur leftover noise

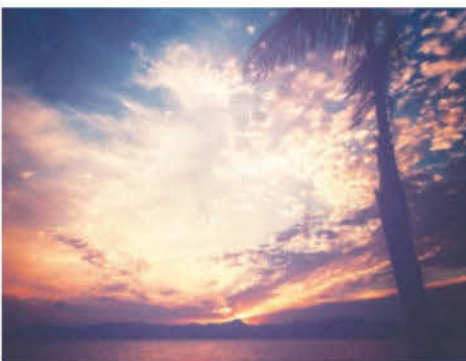
03 The Reduce Noise filter is great at reducing the vast majority of noise in a picture. Just to finish off your edit though, head to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and add a blur of 1.5px, just to smooth over any remaining noise in the picture.



Mask back detail

04 Add a mask to this now blurry, indistinct layer. With a soft, black brush, start masking the details of the picture that you want to show through. Lights can be somewhat blurrier, but the buildings in the picture should be clearer now.

Creative noise fixes How else can you overcome noise in your pictures?



Apply soft focus

Blurring a picture is a great way to hide the grain, as we did in the tutorial, and soft focuses can soften the whole picture and add a nice glow. Simply duplicate your layer, add a Gaussian Blur and set to Screen.



Lighten the layer

Noise often appears in dark areas. By creating a new layer with a dark colour, and setting it to Lighten, you can get rid of the noise in the picture and create this cool effect; the picture looks as if it were taken by a retro camera.



Embrace the noise

If you can't get rid of noise, why not embrace it? Go to Filter>Noise>Add Noise and create a classic, grainy photo that looks like it's stood the test of time. It's a nice effect and one that can make use of your natural noise.

What does it mean?

BLEND MODES – These are Photoshop's way of telling the layers how to react with each other. Even when a layer has been displaced, it won't blend realistically until parts of the base layer are visible. By using blend modes, you can choose whether to reveal dark, light or colour values.

Source file available

Learn this technique with the supplied files

SURREAL EFFECTS

Use Displace techniques for unusual images.



Start image



Understand the Displace filter

Explore this simple technique that can open up a world of creativity

Some filters in Photoshop Elements may sound mysterious with abstract names. The Displace filter is certainly a prime example of this, and can sit inside your Filter menu untouched for years. In this tutorial we'll bring the filter out of its hiding place, dust it off, and show you how easy it is to create interesting art.

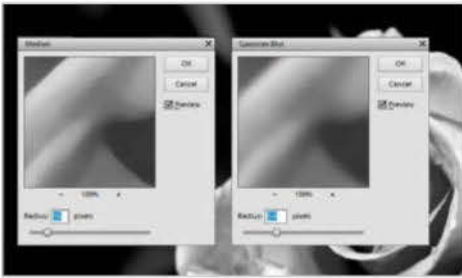
The filter uses black-and-white images to work with the contours of a colour image. This enables you to wrap new textures or images onto different backgrounds or objects. Photoshop Elements takes black values as the low points and white values as the high points, so when applied to a flat layer it'll give the appearance of being

three-dimensional. Once you've grasped the basics, you can add textures to objects, insert logos onto T-shirts, or even give someone a new tattoo.

The following steps will lead you through three different ways to use the Displace filter. The first will reveal how to make a rose look as though it's carved from wood. The second technique looks at adding graphics onto a product photograph, and lastly we show you the tricks behind blending text with a background. Each technique begins with the same simple steps, but then leads into different ways of refining the effect for different results.

Technique 1 Displace effects using textures

Add a surreal twist to everyday objects by using displace techniques



Ready the file

01 Open up the rose image. Desaturate and increase contrast using Enhance>Adjust Lighting. Soften the edges with Filter>Noise>Median set at 10-20px. Then go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and set to 3-7px. Save this as a new PSD, naming it differently, and then close it.



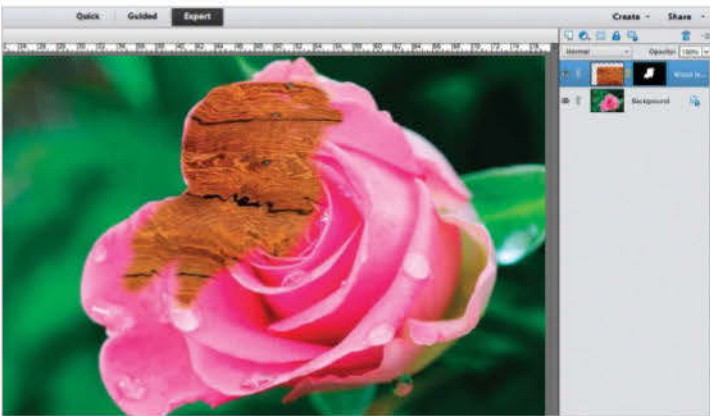
Apply the filter

02 Open the original rose image and the wood texture. Go to Window>Images>Tile and drag the wood on top of the rose. Close the wood image. Go to Filter>Distort>Displace. Put 90 for both values and hit OK. Navigate to your rose PSD file and hit Open.

Expert tip

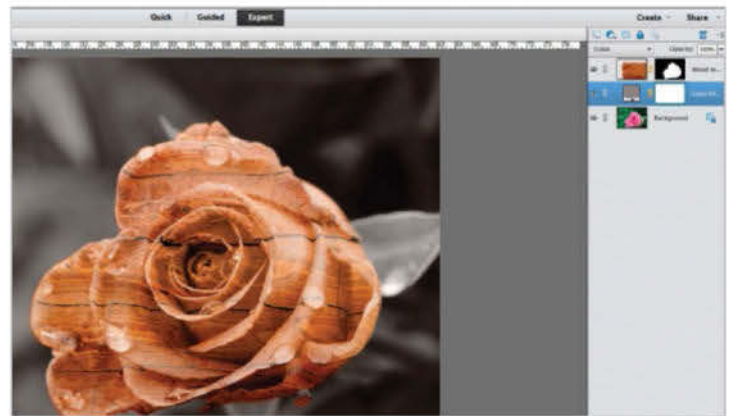
Displacement explained

Displacement effects work by taking values from a 2D image and applying them over an image to create a 3D illusion. Black will be taken as low points and white will be taken as the high points, and in-between values will be rolled towards one of the two extremes. The process only requires a greyscale image and increasing the contrast allows the filter to pick up the lows and highs easily. Doing this can also create some harsh differences in tone, so to keep the displacement smooth and realistic. A blur can be applied to create gradients and smoother transitions.



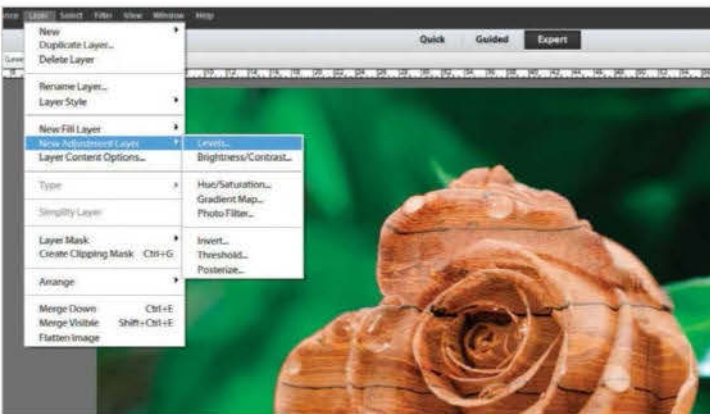
Add a layer mask

03 The wood texture will be warped around a vague rose shape. Add a layer mask using the circle inside the rectangle icon. Fill the mask with black, and then select the Brush tool (B). Begin to paint in white where you want the wood layer to be visible on the rose image.



Blend the layers

04 To make the shape more realistic, set the wood texture layer to Overlay. You can see the details better, but the wood has turned pink. Select the rose layer and go to Layer>New Fill Layer, and pick a grey/brown colour. Set the blend mode of this layer to Color.



Create realism

05 Fill in the layer mask as with the wood texture so the colour only affects the rose. Due to blending, some of the contrast might become lost. To get it back, use a Levels adjustment. Go to Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Levels.



Retrieve contrast

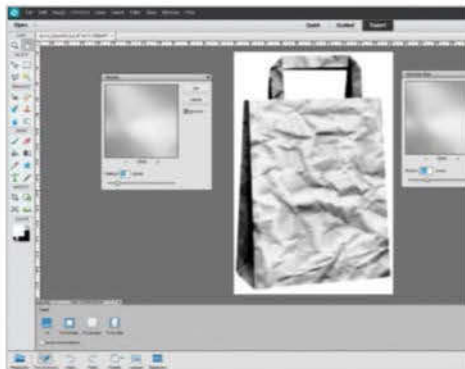
06 Press D to default the colour swatches, click on the Levels' mask and hit Cmd/Ctrl+Backspace to fill with black. On the layer mask, use a small, soft white brush to paint over the shadows to enhance them. Repeat with the highlights and a new Levels adjustment.

Technique 2

Displace a logo

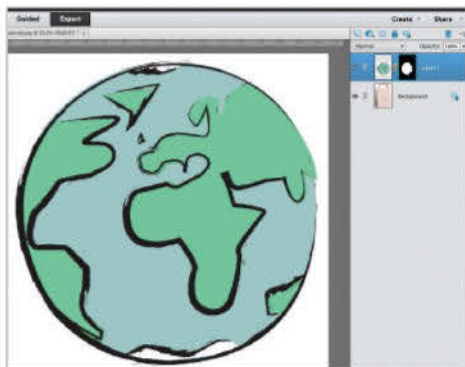
Add your logo or a cool graphic to anything!

As long as you have a shape with varied contours, you can displace it. The displace technique is great for adding logos to t-shirts or bags, or even adding tattoos onto a photo of a person. Using the same simple steps, all you need is a map, a base image and an image or graphic to displace.



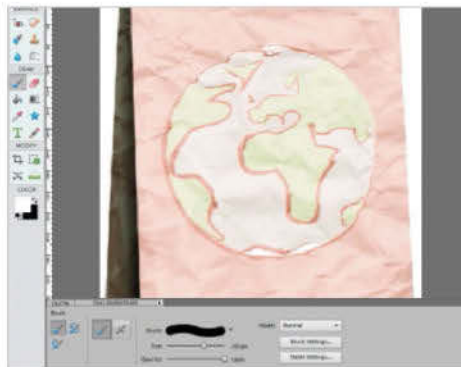
Create your PSD

01 Desaturate the image of the bag, and increase contrast using Levels. The bag blends better when it's blurred slightly, so soften the edges with Filter>Noise>Median set to 10-20px. Then Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur with a Radius of 3-7px. Save this as a new PSD.



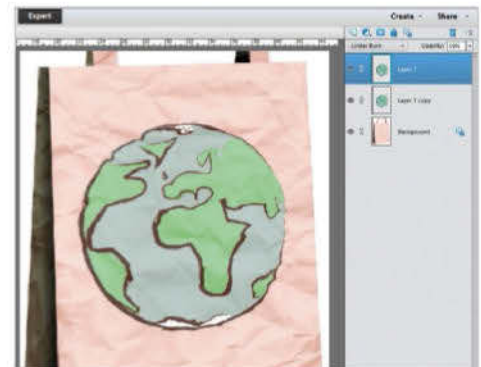
Add the graphic

02 Open the original product image and your graphic icon or logo. Use Window>Images>Tile and drag the graphic onto the product. Add a layer mask and fill it in black. Paint in white over the areas you want to reveal.



Displace

03 With the graphic layer selected, apply the Displace filter and enter a middle value of around 25 in both boxes. Navigate to your PSD file and open it. Set the blend mode to Overlay in order to get some of the bag's texture back.



Restore colour

04 Because of the blend mode, most of the colour was lost. To combat this, duplicate the graphic layer and set the blend mode to Linear Burn. This should restore colour. If not, cycle through other blend modes until you get your desired effect.



YOUR LOGO HERE
Quickly whip up a mock of what your logo looks like on products.

Technique 3

Displace text over cloth

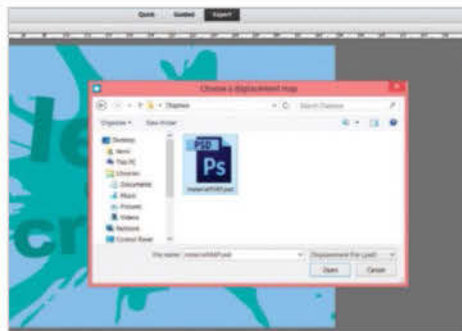
See how easy it is to work with complex textures and displacements in Elements

The great thing about using the Displace filter is that even when you're working with a really complicated base image, Photoshop does all the hard work for you by using the PSD file to work out the various contours, so it's really easy to do. Let's demonstrate here by adding a printed text effect to some rumpled fabric and creating a completely realistic look using blend modes to enhance the depth of shadows and the look of real printed cloth.



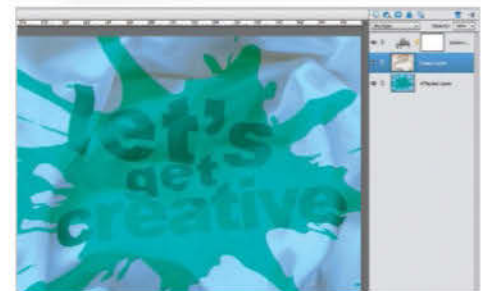
Create a displace file

01 Desaturate the base image. Increase brightness using Levels (Cmd/Ctrl+L) by dragging the sliders towards each other. Go to Filters>Gaussian Blur and set Radius to 3-7px. Save as a PSD file and close.



Apply the object

02 Open the image to place the shape on to. Go to Filter>Distort>Displace. In the dialog box, set the Horizontal and Vertical scales to 15-35 and hit OK. Navigate to your saved PSD image and select it.



Add realism

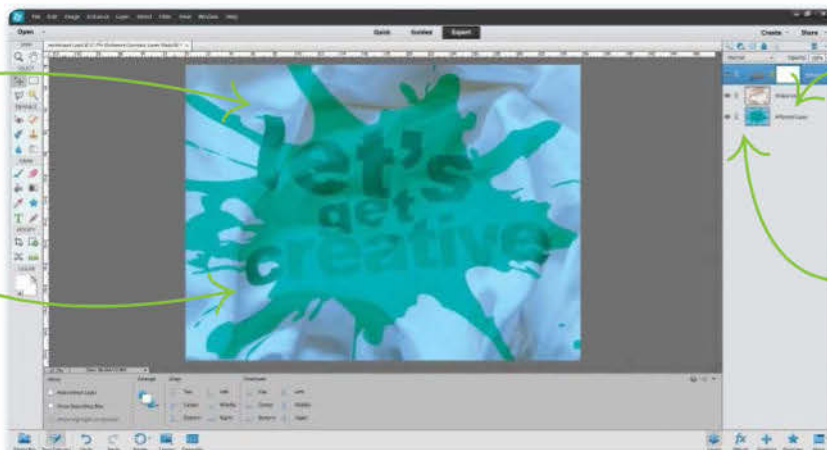
03 The image is distorted, but we need to add back some shape. Open the shape layer, and go to Window>Images>Tile. Drag the shape layer to the top of the distorted image and set its blend mode to Multiply. Also play with the other blend modes.

THE EFFECT

To make a displacement file, create a black-and-white, high-contrast version of the image.

WRAPPING CONTOURS

Elements uses the file to distort the layer, making it look like it moves with the contours of the background image.



SHAPE LAYER

This is the layer we want to put our new image onto; it contains all of the lumps and bumps.

AFFECTED LAYER

The displacement effect is added to a new image. Elements will distort the texture based on the displacement file that is being used.



Photo editing

Learn how to fix, edit and retouch your photos for better effects

- 52** Learn to manipulate light in Elements
Sort out your exposure woes
- 56** Improve exposure and contrast
Check out Elements' built-in tools
- 58** Improve night-time shots
Bring your photos out of the dark
- 62** Correct camera distortion
Give your photos a new perspective
- 66** Fix shadows and lighting
Tweak light and shade in Elements
- 70** Improve family photos
Get the most out of your snaps
- 74** Enhance eyes and teeth
Make your subjects stand out
- 76** Fix closed-eyes shots
Salvage your portrait photos
- 80** Touch up blemishes
Correct red skin and dark circles
- 84** Remove or add facial hair
Make use of brushes and cloning
- 88** Add perspective effects to your photos
Master the illusion of distance



What does it mean?

EXPOSURE – This is simply the amount of light that your image has been subjected to when it was taken. Exposure can be affected by the shutter speed of the camera or the environment. If it is a particularly bright or dull day, then differing levels of light can make your image appear over or underexposed.

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files



Learn to manipulate light in Elements

Sort out those pesky exposure woes with a few quick and simple tricks from the editing book

Lighting your photographs is probably one of the hardest things to get right when taking pictures; even the pros can get it wrong sometimes. Your photos can end up looking too dark or too light and it can seem like the photo is ruined. But that doesn't need to be the case. Some of the fantastic tools within Photoshop Elements can help you to sort out these problems in no time at all. Whether your shutter speed was too fast for enough light to enter, leaving you with an underexposed image, or it didn't close fast enough, leaving you

with an overexposed image, Elements can help fix these issues. In fact, it's not quite the problem you thought.

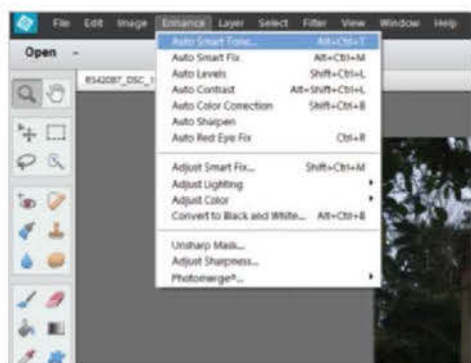
What's also great about Elements is you can select certain parts of the image to change. If only a certain part of your photo seems to be affected, you can concentrate on that area, so if your model seems to be overly dark, you can select them and not change the surrounding environment, which we will explore in the third tutorial. It's really simple, and you won't break a sweat.

Technique 1

Shed some light

Fix underexposure in three simple steps

Have you ever gone to photograph a really great scene only to find there just isn't enough light to make the shot as impressive as you first thought? Don't worry, it happens to the best of us, but the good news is that it's very easy to fix in Elements!



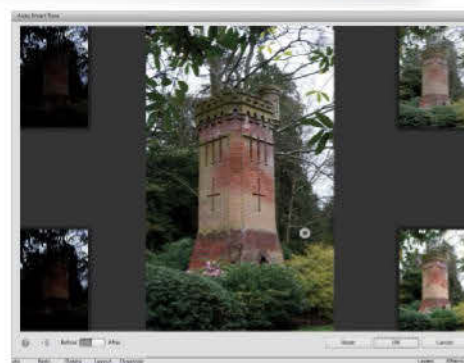
Quick editing

01 Open up your shot that's underexposed. Elements has a host of handy built-in tools. By going into Enhance>Auto Smart Tone, you will be able to easily correct the exposure of the shot.



Make a choice

02 Clicking on this option will open a command box. Follow the instructions to select the area in the grid that appears. It will show you what the image will look like. You can select any part of the grid.



Complete the edits

03 Click OK in the interface once the exposure has been fixed. We've chosen to lean towards the bottom right-hand corner as this option added the most light to this image.

Use the Auto features

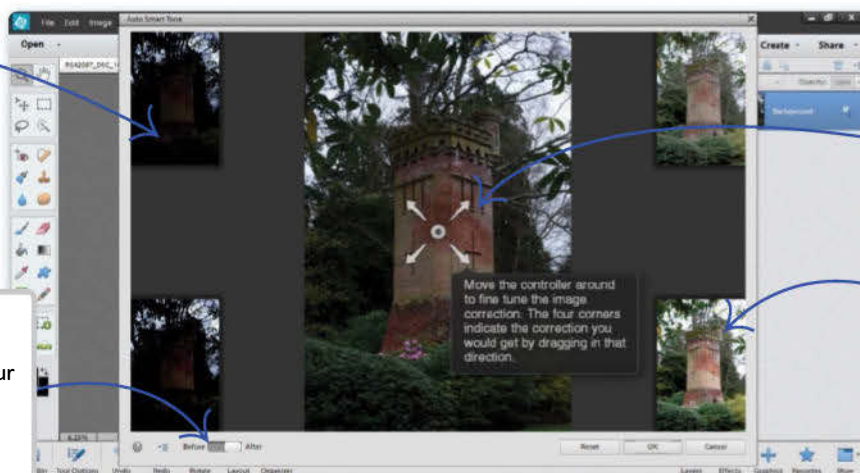
Utilise Elements' automatic edits to fix your photos

FIX OVEREXPOSURE

The left-hand side of the interface will allow you to fix overexposure by taking away light from the image.

BEFORE AND AFTER

Toggle this button to view the before and after of your image – it can be handy for checking everything is looking just right.



AUTO TONING

Inside Auto Smart Tone, control exactly what needs fixing by moving the arrow around the grid that appears.

FIX UNDEREXPOSURE

The right-hand side of Auto Smart Tone will enable you to fix underexposure by adding more light to the image.

Technique 2

Too bright!

How to deal with your camera over compensating the exposure

When taking a photo your camera can sometimes get a bit confused and take in too much light when it's in Auto mode. Your camera may have underestimated how much light there actually was in the scene and applied a shutter speed that was too long, so the resulting image was too bright. Never fear though, there are ways to correct for this photographic snafu. Here's how to take care of it.

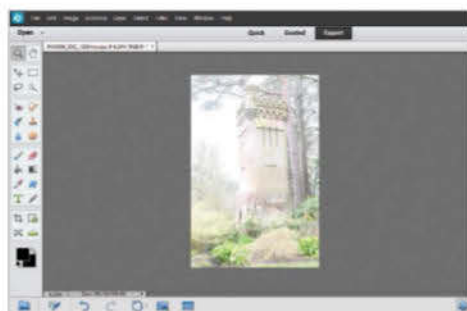


SOLID FILL

Use the different Fill layers to edit photos; in this case a Solid Fill was used in order to make tweaks to the colours.

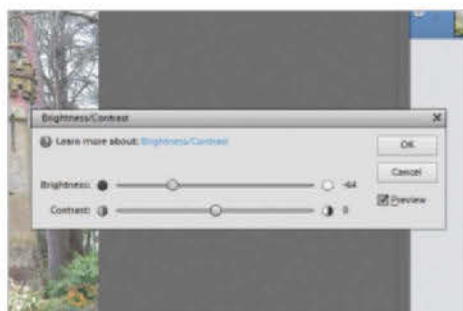
Enhance exposure

Apply these quick fixes to your images



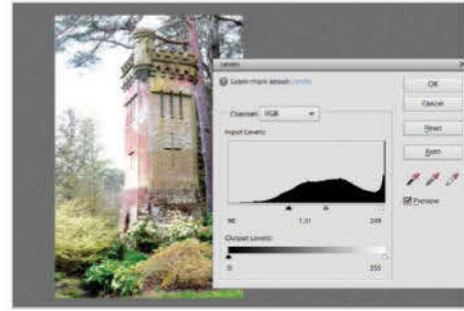
Identify the problem

01 It is clear that this photo has been overexposed, but if you study it, the background is much lighter than the foreground. We can fix this by using the selection tools at a later stage.



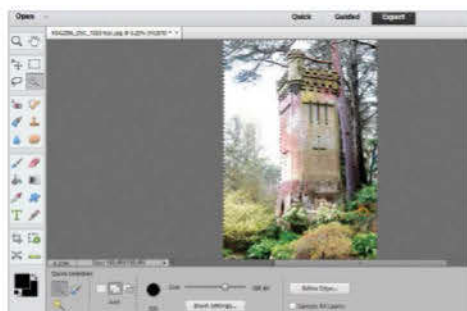
Brightness and contrast

02 First off, take the edge off the sheer brightness of the image by going to Enhance>Adjust Lighting>Brightness/Contrast. Here we've set Brightness to -64 and left the Contrast at 0.



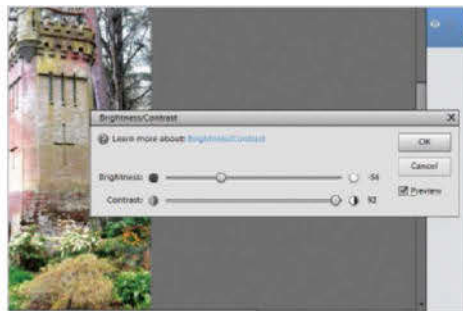
Level up

03 Another way to fix the light is to use the Levels adjustment. By adjusting the black, grey and white arrows, you can change the light in the image. We used 98, 1.31 and 249 as the Input Level.



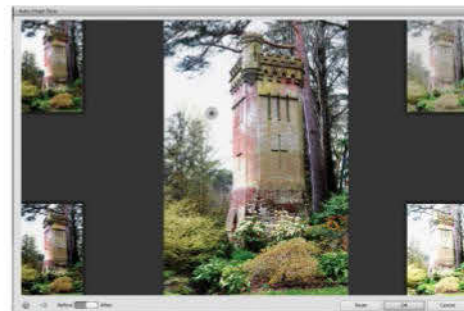
Selection time

04 Because the background of this photo was still quite bright, the selection tools can isolate an area to edit. Here we have used the Quick Selection tool, but use whatever tool you are most comfortable with.



Adjust lighting

05 Once again, head to Enhance>Adjust Lighting>Brightness/Contrast and play with the sliders until the selection matches the rest of your image. We have opted for Brightness: -56 and Contrast: 92.



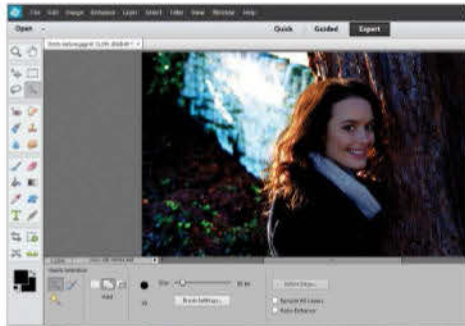
Smart Tone

06 The image still appears to have a bit of a contrasting tone to it, so we can enter into the Auto Smart Tone menu once again and play with the pins until any lighting corrections have been resolved.

Technique 3 Make your images pop

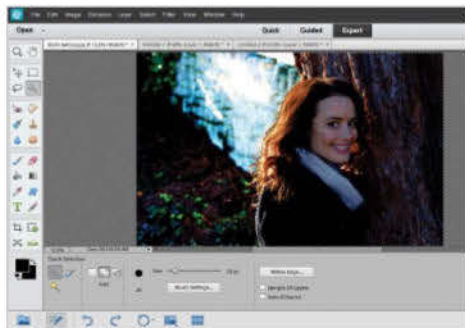
Fix all exposure problems in one image

Sometimes your photo will be subjected to both underexposure and overexposure. This is because your background is so bright that it confuses the camera into thinking that there is more light than there is. If you haven't compensated the shot with the use of the flash, the result can be a darker foreground subject to the image.



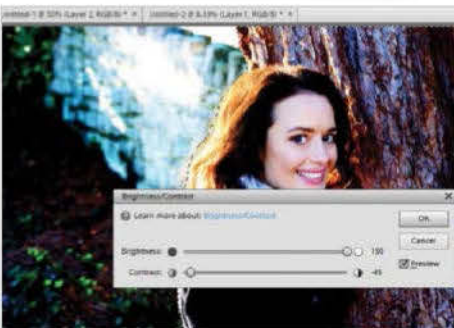
Evaluate your image

01 The first step is to look at your image and decide what the problem areas are. The background has affected the exposure of the model, so it's too bright while she is too dark.



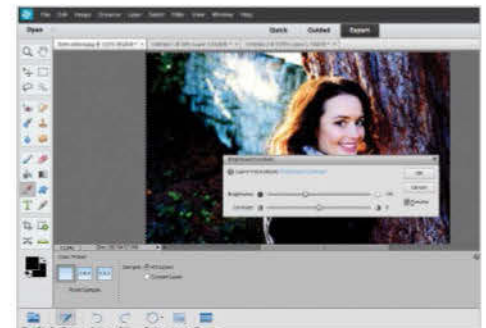
Select your subject

02 We'll start with our model using the Quick Selection tool, but you should use the selection technique of your choice. After editing the model we will combat the overexposed background.



Brightness/Contrast

03 Enter the Enhance menu and select Adjust Lighting>Brightness/Contrast. You want to play with the sliders until you are satisfied with the look of the model. We have opted for Brightness: 150, Contrast: -45.



Inverse

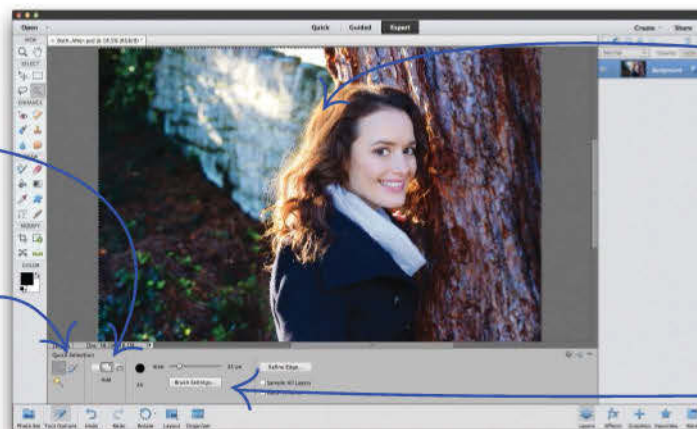
04 Now select the background and re-apply the Brightness/Contrast adjustment layer, tweaking the settings to -39 for Brightness. Create a balance of foreground exposure and background exposure.

ADD AND SUBTRACT

When using the Quick Selection tool you can decide whether to add to your selection or take away from it with these options.

SELECTION TYPE

If your preference isn't the Quick Selection tool, you can choose to use the Selection Brush or the Magic Wand.



SELECTION AREA

Your selection will be shown by a moving dotted line, which means you can either add or subtract from this at any time.

BRUSH SIZE

To get those difficult areas, you can change the size of the brush in order to be more precise with your selection.

Improve exposure and contrast

No Curves? No problem. Elements has plenty of built-in solutions for image editing

Both Photoshop and Photoshop Elements offer a range of tools for improving the exposure, contrast, colour and tone of your photos. A good place to start is usually the Levels command, which works in the same way in both programs, editing three points in your image.

However, in Photoshop there is also the Curves command. This is an incredibly precise tonal control, giving you 14 points to adjust, making it far more powerful than Levels. It does have a steeper learning curve (if you excuse the pun) though, and it can be intimidating for beginners to get to grips with how it works.

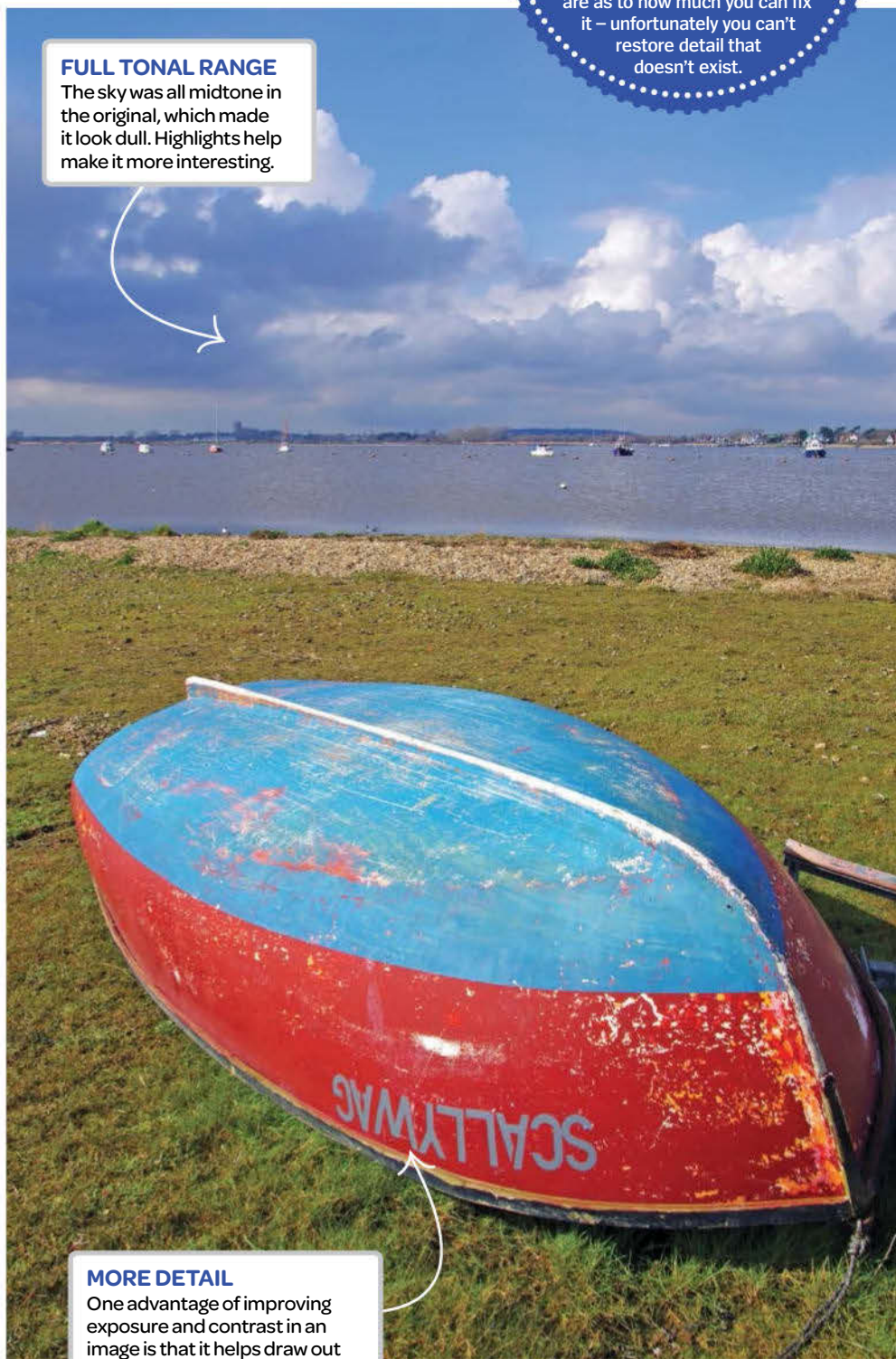
Photoshop Elements doesn't have Curves. There is a similar option under Enhance>Adjust Colors>Adjust Color Curves, which enables you to improve the colours in your images by selecting from presets and adjusting sliders to change the curve. This only offers three points of adjustment, however, the same as Levels and targets colour tone. Also, Levels can be applied as an adjustment layer, whereas Color Curves can't, so it is a destructive process (always work on a duplicate!). Over these pages, we will look at ways you can improve exposure and contrast, without the power of Photoshop's Curves.

What does it mean?

BLOWN HIGHLIGHTS – This term is often used when talking about overexposed images. It is when the bright areas are so light that they merge together and lose detail. It depends how 'blown' the details are as to how much you can fix it – unfortunately you can't restore detail that doesn't exist.

FULL TONAL RANGE

The sky was all midtone in the original, which made it look dull. Highlights help make it more interesting.



MORE DETAIL

One advantage of improving exposure and contrast in an image is that it helps draw out detail, such as this boat texture.



Use Elements' quick fixes If your image needs a boost, let Elements do the hard work



Control exposure

01 In Quick mode, the first thing that you can try is the aptly named Exposure fix from the left-hand menu. It is easy to use, as you simply go through the thumbnails and pick the one that is best for your image. You can fine-tune using the slider.



Work with Lighting

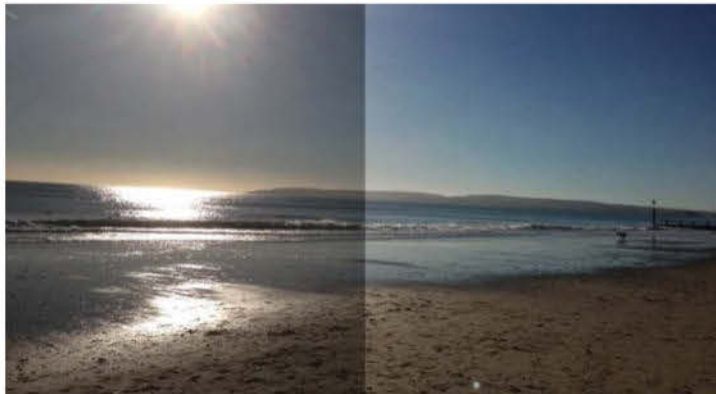
02 The Lighting option is a great way to play with the tones of your image without having to use the Levels dialog box. You can again pick from the thumbnails, but you can target the Shadows, Midtones or Highlights separately.



Use Auto controls

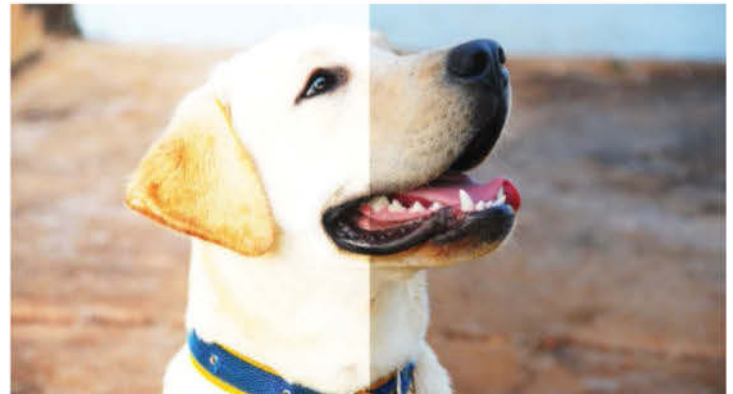
03 Within the same Lighting tool box, there are buttons for Auto Levels and Auto Contrast. You can also access these from the Enhance menu, along with Auto Color. Automated controls analyse your image and make edits to improve the exposure/contrast without you having to do more than click.

Other methods More ways you can edit the exposure and contrast in Elements



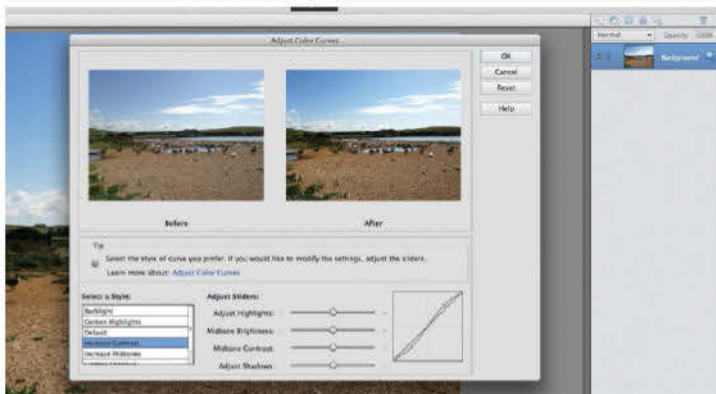
Fix underexposure

An underexposed image has tones that are too dark. A quick fix for this is to open the image in Photoshop Elements in Expert mode. Duplicate the layer (Cmd/Ctrl+J), then set the duplicate's blending mode to Screen. Adjust the Opacity to suit.



Fix overexposure

Overexposed images are usually too light. You can fix this in the same way that we fixed the underexposed image, except that you set the blending mode to Multiply. It's difficult to hide blown highlights, but for mild overexposure, it works well.



Adjust Color Curves

We mentioned the Adjust Color Curves option in our introduction, and while it's not as good as Levels for exposure and contrast, it is great for improving colour tone across your image. Pick from the available presets and then fine-tune with the sliders to achieve the effect you want.



Smart Fix

We haven't mentioned it yet, but Elements' Smart Fix is designed to improve your exposure, tone and colours in one click, which is a great place to start! Simply select the option from the Quick edit mode menu and pick a thumbnail or hit Auto to process your snap.

What does it mean?

NOISE – If a photo has noise, it's become fuzzy around the edges. This is a common problem with badly resized images as it's a side effect of low resolution, but it also happens often when lightening dark photos. This is because Elements can't artificially produce more detail where the darkness was.

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

ADD NOISE

It seems counterproductive, but adding a touch of noise helps to give an interesting texture to night shots.

FILTER EDITS

Using the Paint Daubs filter produces interesting specks.

Improve night-time shots

Bring your photos out of the dark with Elements

Night-time is an infamously difficult time to take photos for any photographer, especially if you're just relying on the available light. So if the images are difficult to take in the first place, imagine how difficult it will be to edit these same snaps!

While it's tempting to discard a picture for being too dimly lit, Elements can prove extremely helpful in the editing department. Noise is a common and complex problem in low-light photography, as is trying to find an interesting way to enhance a dark shot without affecting the atmosphere. The darkness of a piece need not restrict

your creativity, though, as in just a few simple steps, and by using editing tools and techniques that aren't necessarily designed for low-lit pictures, you can shine new light on your darker snaps.

Whether you're hoping to restyle the light of a piece or you're simply looking for a little imaginative flair to brighten up a night-time portrait, these tutorials are packed with inspiration on how to tweak even the most shadowy photos. And if you're also a photographer, they'll save you a fortune on top of the range lighting equipment, too! So read on and get ready to breathe new life into low-light shots.



Technique 1 Creative ideas

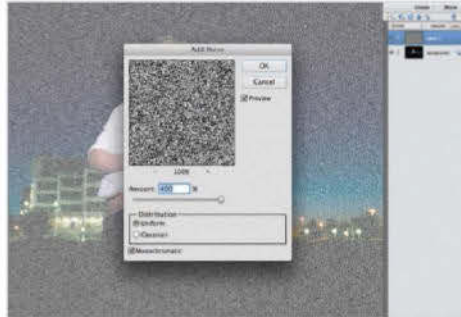
Often it is the subtle edits that can be the most rewarding, especially when it isn't obvious that a photo has been edited at all! There are plenty of artistic techniques in Elements that can enhance a low-light

Give your darker photos an artier edge with filter edits image particularly well, and the deep shadow areas in a photo can really bring out a retro, dusty lens texture. Alternatively, have a go at experimenting with a well-placed light leak...



New grey layer

01 Create a layer and fill with grey: this will form the basis for speckles, so shade isn't important. If you wish though, you can create a new layer at the end, set to Screen, and brush a lighter grey for a gradient tone.



Add some noise

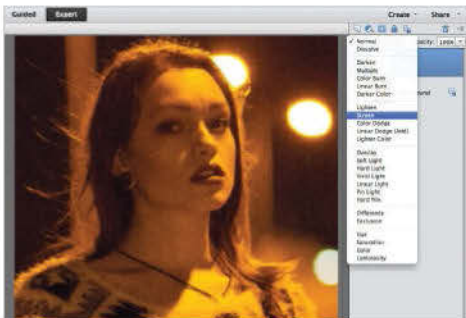
02 Go to Filter>Noise>Add Noise. Choose the maximum 400%, select Uniform, and make sure the noise is Monochrome. Set the blend mode to Screen, and it should look like an old television set display.



Paint Daubs

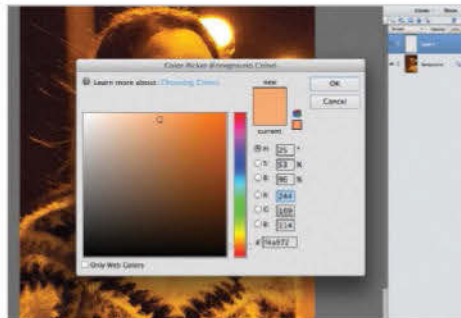
03 Head to the Filter Gallery and choose Paint Daubs. Set Brush Type to Simple, click OK. Inverse so the specks are white and the background is black, and duplicate until you're happy with the appearance.

Light leaks Blend light into your images



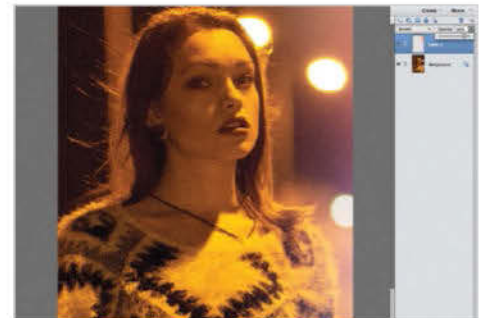
Add new Screen layer

01 Add a new layer, and change the blend mode to Screen. This is going to be the layer you brush the light leaks onto, so by switching the blend mode from the start you're readying the canvas for the effect.



Choose colours

02 Light leaks are often bright, pastel shades that complement the original image. Delicacy is key with darker photos; choose a soft brush, and touch around the edges of the picture.



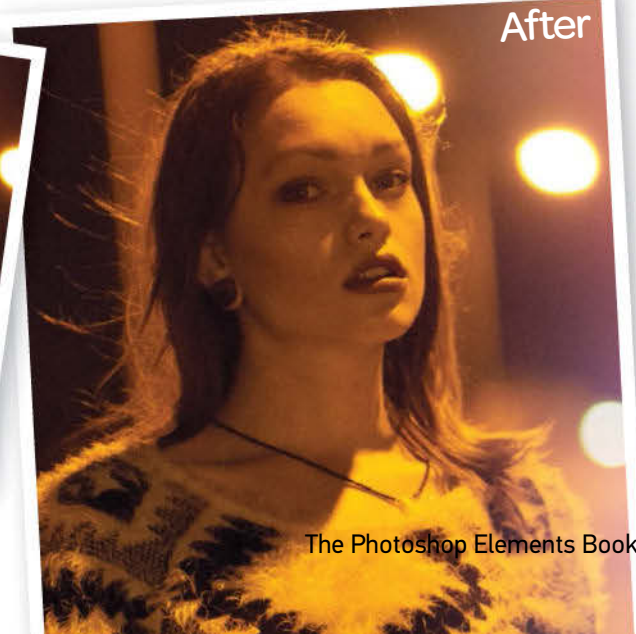
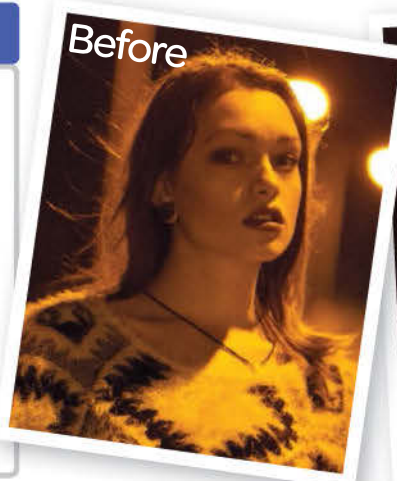
Tidy up

03 Reduce the Opacity – 80% usually works well – and ensure that the leak isn't too garish. Maybe research light-leaked photos for inspiration, and experiment with colourful glows in your pictures.

Expert tip

Flip to inverse

It can be difficult to pick up on the little details while editing dark photos, so why not temporarily inverse your picture while you're working on it by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+I? You'll see much more when your photo is comprised mainly of whites, as paler colours contain more light for our pupils to process. Inversing is a great little trick to use while you're using Selection tools – you'll be amazed by how many more shades you see when the colours on the picture are flipped – just remember to inverse the picture again when you've finished to go back to normal.



Technique 2

Lighten the background

Adjust the brightness of a background, without having to edit the subject

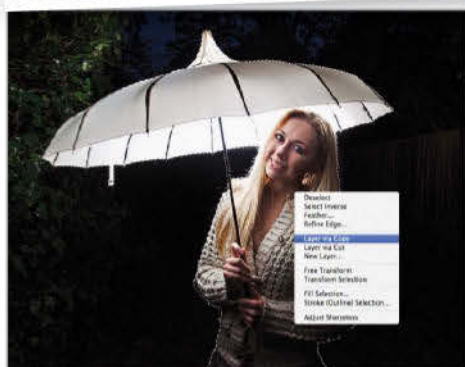
Most of the time, a camera's flash only covers the foreground of the photo. We've all seen snaps of a well-lit person against a forebodingly dark background, and striking the perfect balance is a tricky thing indeed. Luckily it's only a few simple steps away in Elements!

Start image



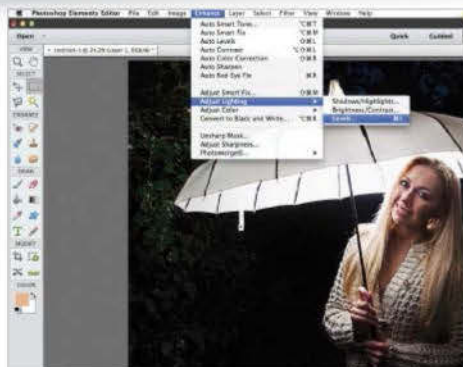
LIGHTER BACKGROUND

By isolating the background, you can lighten it to bring out detail without compromising the quality of the subject.



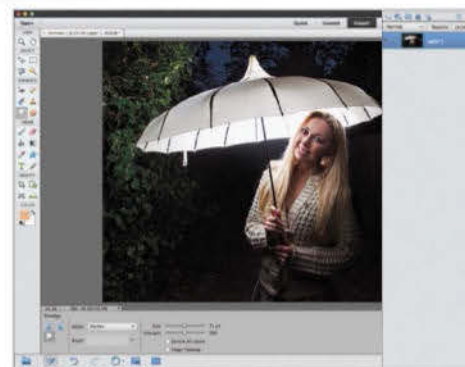
Select subject from image

01 Firstly, we need to select the person in the photo, so that we can exclude them from the brightening process. Choose either the Magnetic or Polygonal Lasso, and draw around the subject; when you've done so, right-click, and choose Layer Via Copy.



Lighten

02 Head to Enhance>Adjust Lighting>Levels. Below the Input Levels map, you'll see three sliders; move the middle one to the left to lighten the picture. Generally 1.48 is a good figure, but different photos may vary.



Tidy up

03 With the base layer edited, merge the foreground and background together again. Use the Smudge tool around the edges of the subject to soften, and go to Enhance>Adjust Color>Adjust Hue/Saturation if the brightening has made the picture a little pale.

Technique 3

Learn to reduce noise

Get rid of the fuzz that overexposure creates

Often Photoshop users avoid brightening up images, simply due to the fuzzy edges that an edit can leave. The Noise Reduction filter only goes so far, but there are manual ways of touching up your edited image, and if you're feeling creative, it can definitely leave a much nicer finish to your piece.

DARK AND MOODY

Taking a manual approach to reducing noise is a good way of getting a more effective result than with filters alone.

Start image



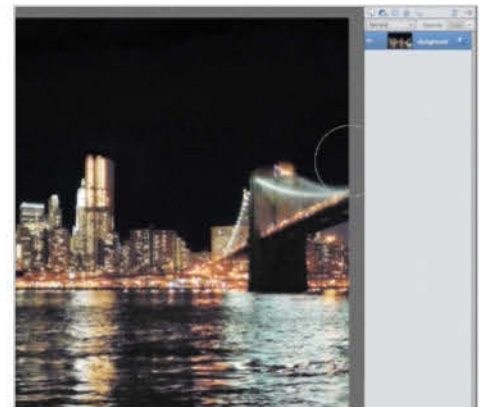
Identify the noise

01 Lighten up your image slightly with the Levels tool, and see where the noise appears most; in this case, it's just around the buildings in the sky. Select the whole sky from the picture with the Polygonal Lasso – this may take a while – and create a new layer.



Brush in colour

02 Select a midnight blue colour and begin to brush the colour in the selection parameters of this new layer. This will give a blocky texture to the picture, but simply change to the Multiply blend mode to adjust this.



Smudge

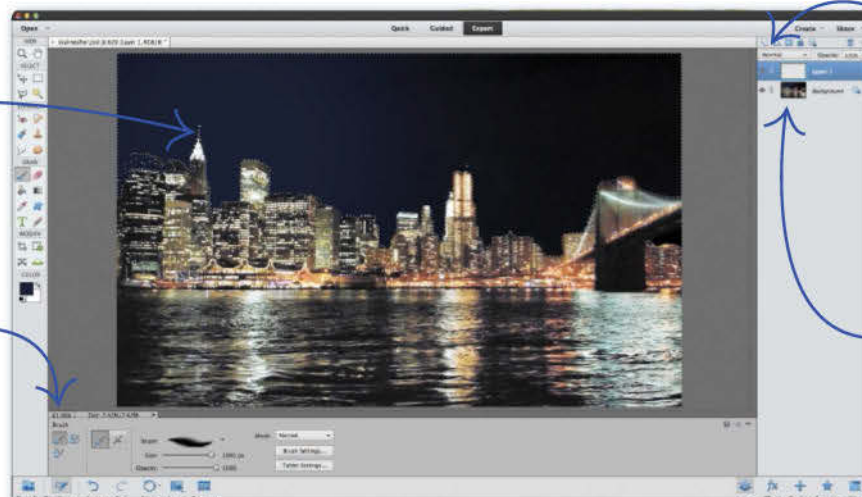
03 Merge all layers and use the Smudge tool with Strength set to 50% to start smudging, at least around the lights, to soften the whole picture. Leave some lit-up buildings to stand out from the sky, but most edges will need smoothing over.

SELECTION

Use selection tools to pick out and draw around the sections in which you'd like to reduce noise.

BRUSH

Choose a dark colour – or perhaps even a gradient – in order to complement the deep black of the original sky.



BLEND MODES

Multiply and Lighten blend modes can help mix the original sky colour with a brushed block of colour for a natural-looking effect.

BACKGROUND LAYER

Try not to lighten the foreground too much, otherwise noise will seep through to this layer, too.

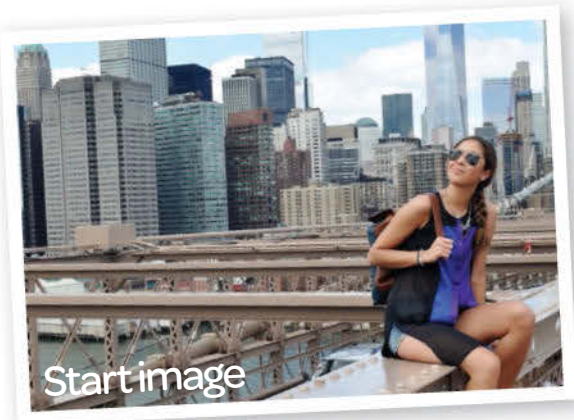
Correct camera distortion in Elements

Use a simple distort filter to throw a new perspective on your photos

The best photo fixes are the ones that don't look edited. It is easier said than done, but the perfect correction can be both powerful and subtle. If you can make an edited picture look as if it's always been like that, then you are halfway to becoming a master of Photoshop.

It may seem like a magic trick now, but there are ways to correct any picture and photo fixes for any occasion. While these photo fixes are great tools to have at the ready, actually, the obvious filters are also a fantastic place to start. The Correct Camera Distortion filter for example, is a simple way to delicately play with the perspective and scale of a photo and even correct the flaws that photographers sometimes encounter.

However, that doesn't mean that camera correction has to be an arduous and boring quick fix. There's still fun that can be had from transforming a photo with only a few simple clicks. Let's look at three of the main techniques that the Correct Camera Distortion filter handles and see how they can be applied into your photos.



A NEW PERSPECTIVE

The Correct Camera Distortion filter adjusts the perspective and scale of your photo, as well as correcting any faults.

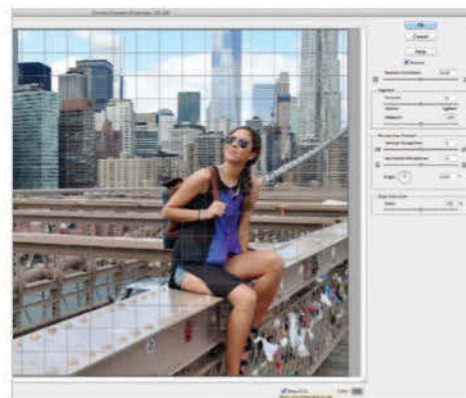


Technique 1

Tweak the perspective

Shift the focus from one side of an image to another

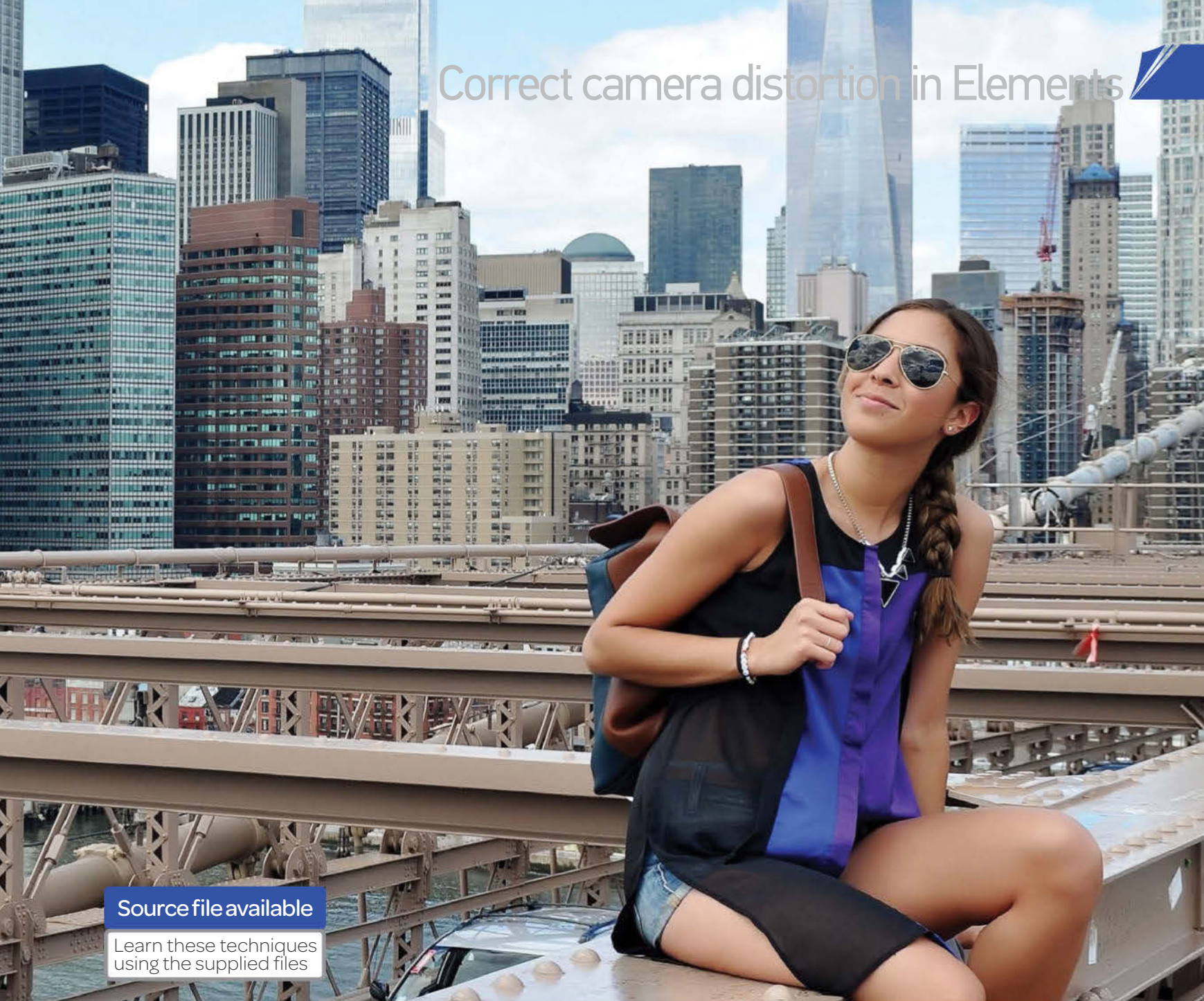
Perspective is something more often associated with the Transform and Crop tools, but you can easily alter the perspective of a picture by using Camera Correction. It is the perfect way to keep the straight lines in your picture impeccably parallel and give the impression that you used a tripod to take the snap.



Show grid

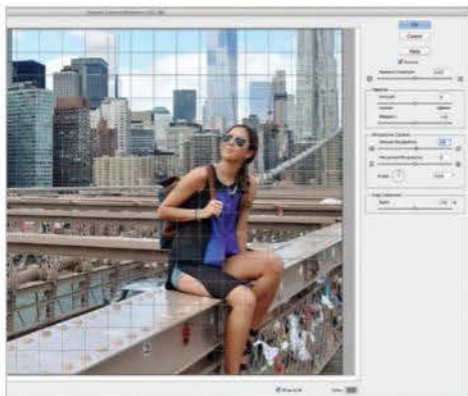
01 For this picture, we're going to use the grid, as cities rely much more heavily on straight lines than natural shots do. You may not want a perfectly straight shot, but a grid will help align a picture more accurately. Click the option at the bottom.

Correct camera distortion in Elements



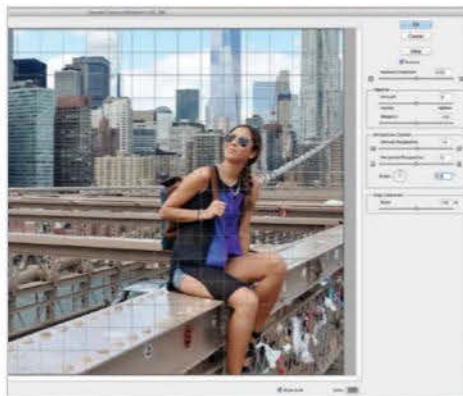
Source file available

Learn these techniques using the supplied files



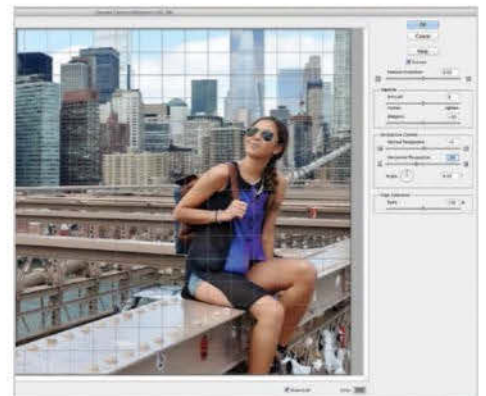
Get a vertical perspective

02 Tweak the Vertical Perspective slightly. You might want it to appear as if the viewer is looking up at the buildings, or you could make them more level with the viewer; it's entirely up to you, but only change this setting very slightly.



Adjust the angle

03 Turn the Angle of the photo slightly so that the buildings and the grid are perfectly parallel. You might want to tweak both the Vertical Perspective and the Angle simultaneously and experiment with what you think looks best.



The horizontal perspective

04 With the ground work already laid, you can now tweak the Horizontal Perspective to give the subject a much sharper focus. The best part about this is that it will not interfere with the Vertical Perspective at all.

Technique 2

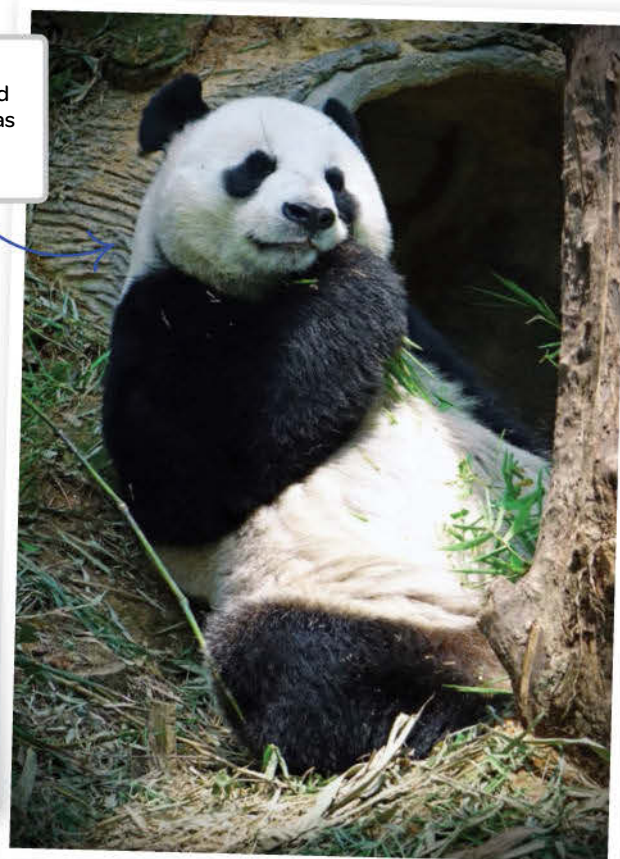
Add a vignette

Give a retro touch to the edges of any photograph

You probably thought that adding a vignette would be a case of manually brushing the edges of a photo, and it can be if you want to create a deep, dark edge. However, to apply an understated fade to the corners of a photograph it couldn't be easier, as it relies on just a couple of sliders to give a retro feel to any shot.

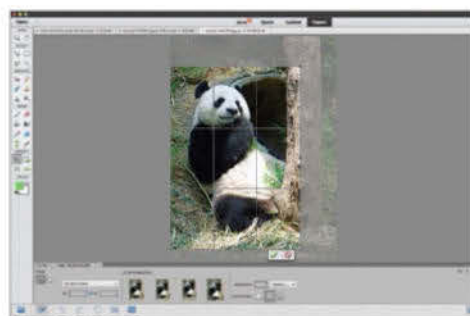
A RETRO LOOK

The vignette around the central focus has intensified the light and shade.



Apply a vignette

Use sliders to adjust the amount of vignette around your image



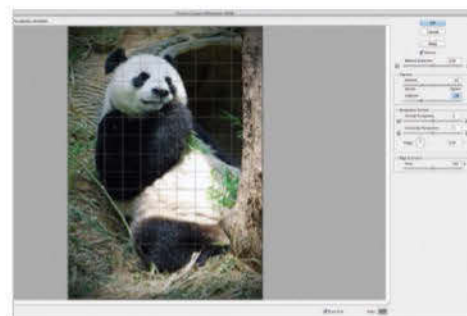
Centralise the photo

01 A vignette is added to the edges of a photo, so make sure your subject is within the perimeters to occupy the central spotlight. Crop as necessary or find a photo that the vignette will really suit.



Alter the amount

02 Move the sliders to adjust the amount of vignette you want added to the image – decide if you want it to be light or dark. Dark vignettes are generally more popular and give a lo-fi look to any photo!

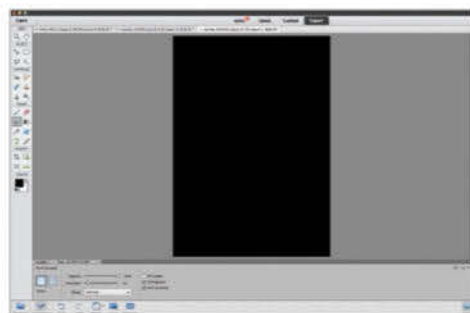


Alter the Midpoint

03 Use the Midpoint sliders to decide how far you want the vignette to infringe the central focus of your picture. This may depend on how much of the picture your subject takes up or how retro you want it.

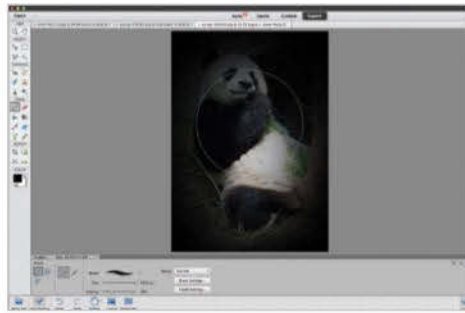
Manually improve your vignette

Use brushes to enhance the camera-correction edit



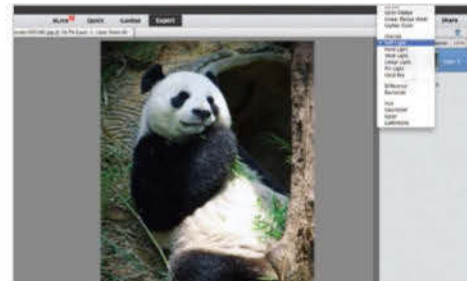
Black layer

01 If you want a black vignette, create a new layer and fill it in black. You could create a vignette of any colour, but we're going to go with a classic dark one to show you how to enhance the one we created.



Mask and Erase

02 Create a mask over the black layer. Select a big, soft, black brush and brush over the mask, revealing the subject in the centre of the photo. Brush out to the edges as far as you want the vignette to go.



Set Blend mode

03 Now set the blend mode to Soft Light to complete the effect. You might want to experiment with different blend modes and opacity at this point. For example, fading the photo out to monochrome could look really effective.

Technique 3

Correct the distortion

Bend your photos and create a much straighter finish

Photographs rarely turn out exactly as you want them, which is why we have photo fixes. Photo fixes should be as straightforward as possible, and Photoshop's Correct Distortion slider is a basic modification that can be added to any picture. It can be used to give depth or realign any photo, and relies only on the one slider.

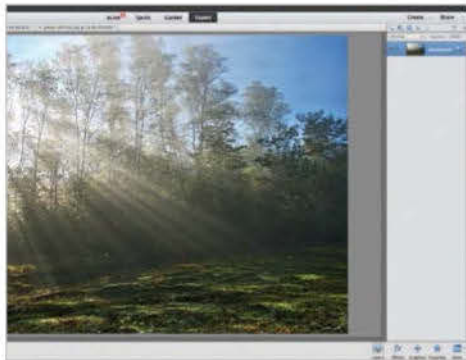
BEND THE PHOTO
Give depth or realign a photo with the Correct Distortion slider.



Start image

What does it mean?

VIGNETTE – A vignette is often an accidental side-effect of photography. It reduces in Brightness and Saturation further away from the centre of a picture to create a vintage-looking darkness at the edges. It's a popular after-effect to add a retro touch to a modern photo, like a light leak or filter.



Choose a photo

01 Pick a photo that you want to correct the distortion of. Photos of trees are good to begin with, as it's not vital to stick to rigid, straight lines, but you can still realign and flatten them out by eye.



Remove the distortion

02 Head to Filter>Correct Camera Distortion. The top option you'll see will be Distortion. This pulls the photo either in or out, rather like a fisheye effect. Experiment until the trees all look straighter and tilt the angle slightly to level the picture.



Edge Extension

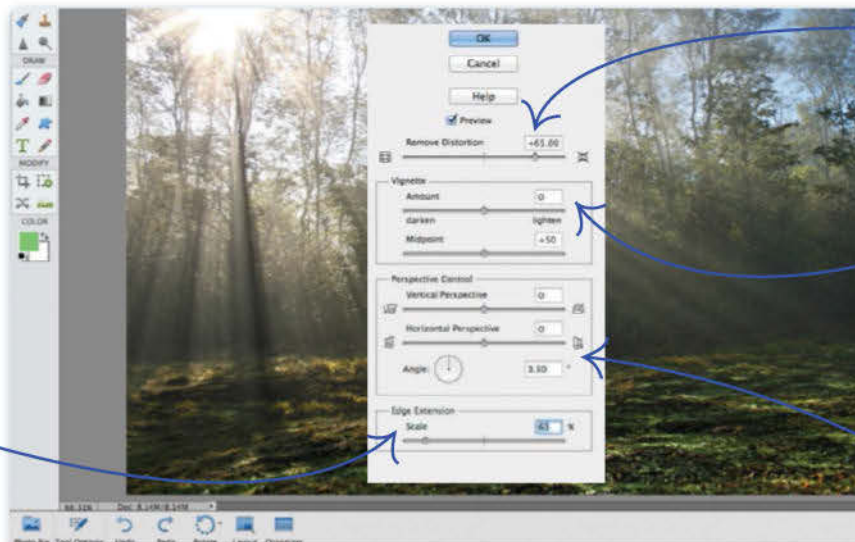
03 The Edge Extension option allows you to either zoom in or out on your picture, which makes it a perfect final step for you to assess how your photo looks from afar. Zoom out to see how the shot looks, before moving the counter back to normal.

Remove any flaws

Use these tools to improve the look of your photo

EDGE EXTENSION

Best used as a Zoom tool, the Edge Extension can also be used ultimately as a final crop for your edited pictures.



REMOVE DISTORTION

Stop photos from beveling outwards or pulling inwards with an almost fisheye control to straighten up shots.

ADD A VIGNETTE

Add dark – or light – faded edges to your photos for a classic or homemade twist on any picture.

PERSPECTIVE CONTROL

Throw more focus to the one side of your photo and then level up the straight lines in your picture.

Fix shadows and lighting

Fix your photos and compositions by simply tweaking the light and shade in Elements

In photography, lighting and shading can mean the difference between a perfect picture and an overexposed mess. Unfortunately it's extremely easy to get the balance completely wrong when taking pictures, especially if you don't have the latest kit, but whatever the reason for the problem, a swift bout of editing on the brightness and shadows can improve a photo immensely.

And it's not just ordinary snaps that can benefit from these kinds of edits, either. Compositions require the perfect mix to make a subject blend into a background, and there are various techniques you can employ to ensure that this happens. Photoshop's collection of brushes are a great option, as it gives you ultimate control over where the light in your picture should fall, but there are some great enhancements you can make with sliders, too.

Learning how to add shadows in your picture is an absolute necessity if you want to become an expert on compositions, and lighting techniques are certainly useful when it comes to making your picture look realistic. Ultimately though, these are techniques that can be applied to any picture that you take, in order to enhance the natural light and shade. Here are our three essential techniques to master; you can use them individually, or apply all three to one project.

Source file available

Learn these techniques using the supplied files

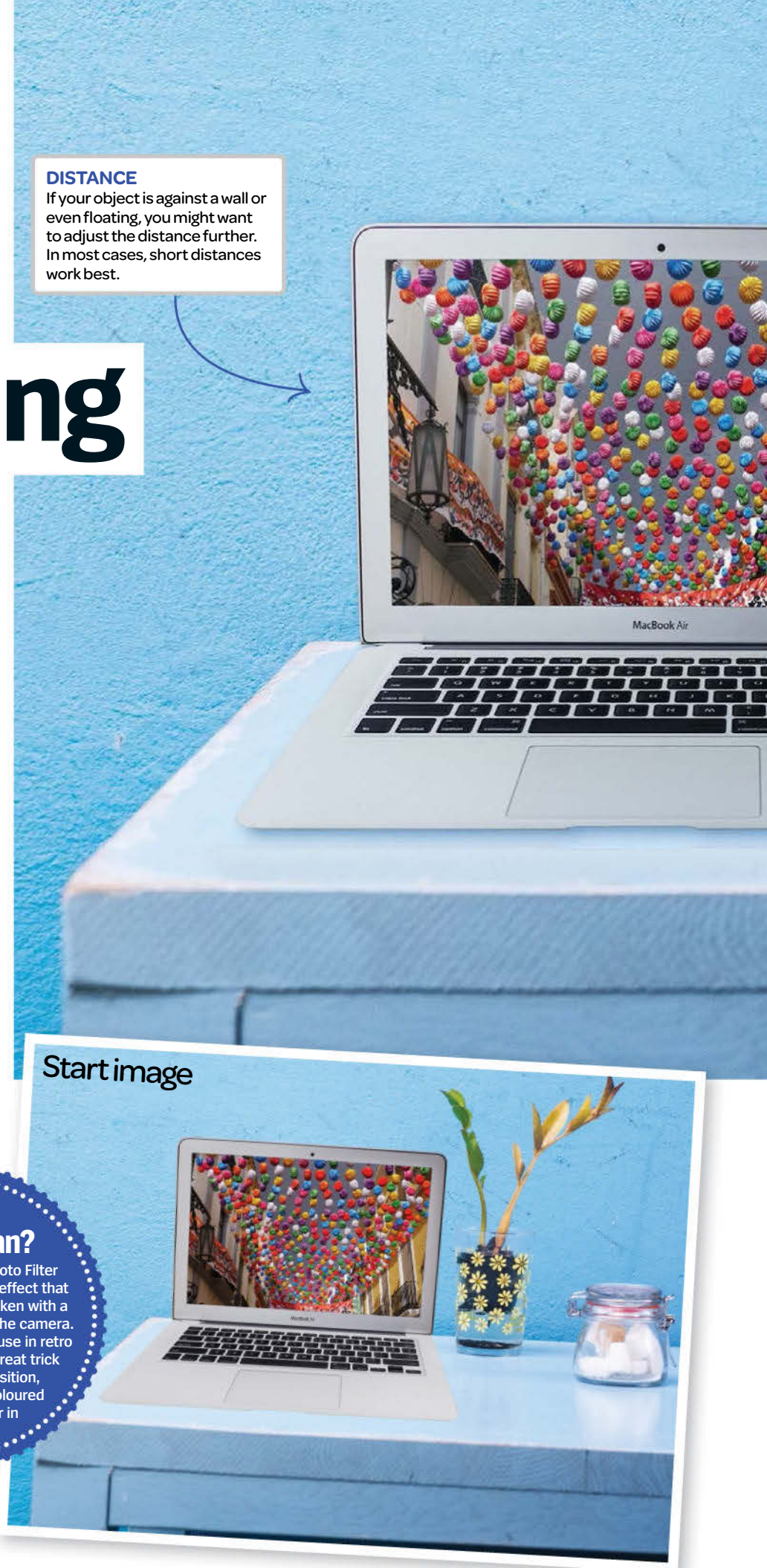
DISTANCE

If your object is against a wall or even floating, you might want to adjust the distance further. In most cases, short distances work best.

Start image

What does it mean?

PHOTO FILTER – The Photo Filter adjustment creates the effect that your picture has been taken with a coloured lens in front of the camera. This is a useful effect to use in retro photos, but it's also a great trick for unifying a composition, because it gives a coloured tint to every layer in your picture.



Fix shadows and lighting



Technique 1 A quick fix Use layer styles to instantly correct shade and lighting



Add a drop shadow

01 Go to Layer>Layer Style>Style Settings, and click on the option to add a Drop Shadow. Make a judgement on where the light is, and change the Lighting Angle; adjust the Opacity to 35%, Distance to 20 and Size to 40 to create strong but subtle shade.



Place a gradient

02 Create a new layer above your object layer. Create a black to white gradient in the direction of the light in your picture, Ctrl/right-click the layer and add a clipping mask. Change the blend mode of this clipping mask to Soft Light.



Apply finishing touches

03 Finally, we're going to add a reflection on the laptop. Duplicate the layer, flip it vertically, and position it just below the original layer. Add a mask and use a gradient to fade the bottom of the reflection out. Change the Opacity to 40%.

Technique 2

Fix your lighting

Brush over your picture to correct lighting on a subject

Lighting can be more than just a simple tweak of sliders; it can be a creative way to add brightness and colour into your picture.

Getting an overall balance in your picture and readjusting the lighting, though, is a combination of being creative and using the Enhance options. Check out these steps and discover all you need to produce colourful, natural-looking lighting in photos or compositions.



Make subtle brush dots

01 With a light yellow colour (#ecd8ab) to match the tone in the picture, we're going to make some dabs on the subject in the places that the light might shine. Add a new layer and start brushing on the lighter side of the subject.



Blend and reduce opacity

02 With your light dabs added, turn the layer's blend mode to Soft Light. Then turn the Opacity down on this layer too – this can be anywhere between 40% and 60% – to keep the effect subtle. You want just a hint of colour and warmth.



Brush the background

03 Just to give an overall tone to the whole picture now and not just the subject, select a bigger brush and lightly brush over lighter aspects of the background. Set the layer to Soft Light and Opacity down to around 30%.



Adjust Shadows/Highlights

04 Create a new layer from existing ones by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+Alt/Opt+Shift+E and go to Enhance>Adjust Lighting>Shadows/Highlights. Lighten Shadows by 12%, darken Highlights by 3% and up the Midtone Contrast by 15% to put back colour and contrast.



Tweak the Levels

05 Levels are a great adjustment to control the overall brightness and contrast in your picture. Head to Enhance>Adjust Lighting Levels and bring the picture down in brightness slightly by moving the middle slider to 0.92.



Add a filter

06 Filters are always a sensible way to end a composition, but when correcting lighting, they can inject a tone and overall saturation back into your picture, unifying the subject and backdrop. Go to Filter>Adjustments>Photo Filter to find them.

Technique 3

Add a shadow

Use dark brushes and opacity to subtly shade

If lighting is about colour, brightness and injecting a little creativity into your pictures, shading is about balancing that brightness with the laws of gravity. A subject without a shadow looks obviously edited in, and any lighting that's been added to a picture needs the counteracting shadow behind it; it needn't be difficult, though.

BACKGROUND

The background layer needn't change in this edit. Don't brush onto the background, as then you can't alter the opacity.



Create a large shaded area

01 Start off with a big black, soft brush, and brush roughly on a new layer where the shadow in your picture should fall judging by where the lighting is. Try to replicate the shape of your subject or object, but don't be too accurate.



Build up shadow

02 Turn your first shadow layer down to 20% Opacity and then on another layer, do the exact same thing, only try to be a little more precise; don't brush all the way out to the shadow, and just build up the shade.



Add further darkness

03 We're going to do the same thing with a third layer, again, brushing a smaller space within the big shadow. Now we have the realistic effect of the subject casting a bigger, heavier shadow that looks lighter at the edges.



Mask and finish off

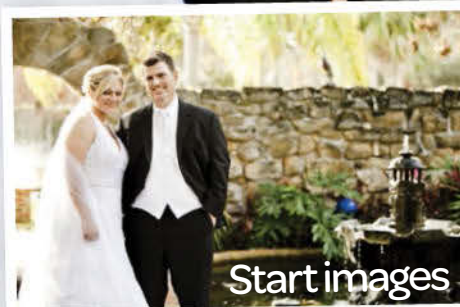
04 Finally, you might want to adjust the individual opacities of your shadow layers, but this isn't a vital adjustment. Add masks to each layer, and just touch up the shadow lightly with a soft brush to give it slightly more shape.

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

ENHANCE PHOTOS

Remove unwanted items, merge the best bits, or paste facial features on photos to create the ultimate 'best of' shot.



Start images

Improve family photos

Techniques to help you get the most out of your snaps

We all take more photos than we need to, just so that we have the choice of which ones we most want to keep. Afterwards comes the customary flicking-through-the-pictures ritual, deciding on the best and worst photos, saving and binning depending on what works and what doesn't.

Imagine if you could pick and choose the best aspects of a handful of photos and combine them into the one picture? Even smartphones can take photo after photo these days by holding down the shutter button, so it makes sense to get the very best out of each of them. These are basic composition techniques, but by

simply applying them to your family photos, you can completely change the feel of a shot.

Though there are numerous ways to compile a 'best of' shot, these techniques are some of the more challenging and often frustrating photo fixes out there. However, they will definitely satisfy the perfectionist in you and can improve the look of any photo.

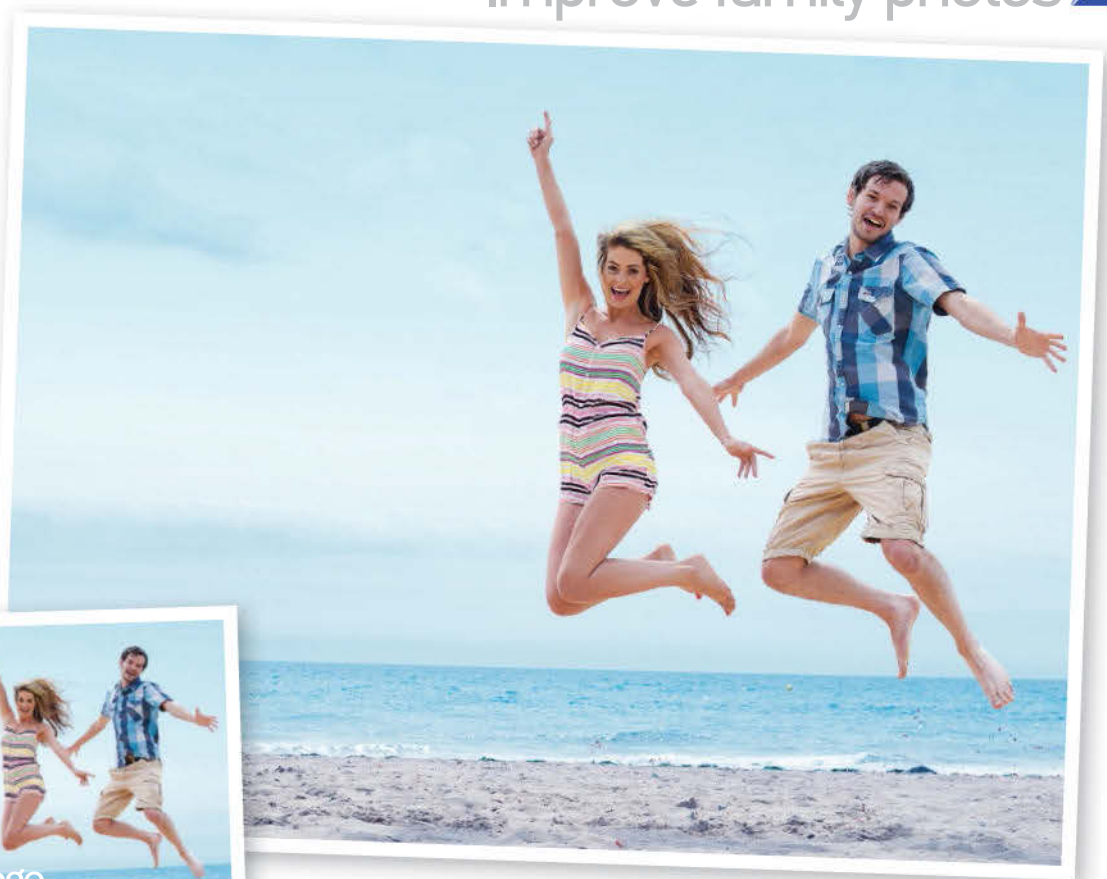
Let's run through three vital techniques that Elements offers to help you combine, compile and improve your family photos. Then you won't need endless family albums full of the same photo over and over again!

Technique 1

Remove anything!

Get rid of an unwanted person from a photo with Content Aware

The age-old problem of strangers invading the backdrops of your photos needn't be a problem anymore. Content Aware is a fantastic tool that intelligently removes anything from a photo. Simply select, use the tool, and Content Aware will do its best to wallpaper over that selection as if there was never anything there to start with. Let's use it on a main subject to show what it can really do.



Make your selection

01 Use any kind of selection tool to make your selection around the subject or object you wish to remove from the picture – we're using the Polygonal Lasso. There's no need to be precise, because you are removing this selection from the picture!



Content Aware

02 Cmd/Ctrl+right-click and choose Fill Selection. Here, there will be a drop-down box, so go to Use>Content Aware. The tool will basically clone over your selection for you and replace the selection with bits of the background.



Finish up

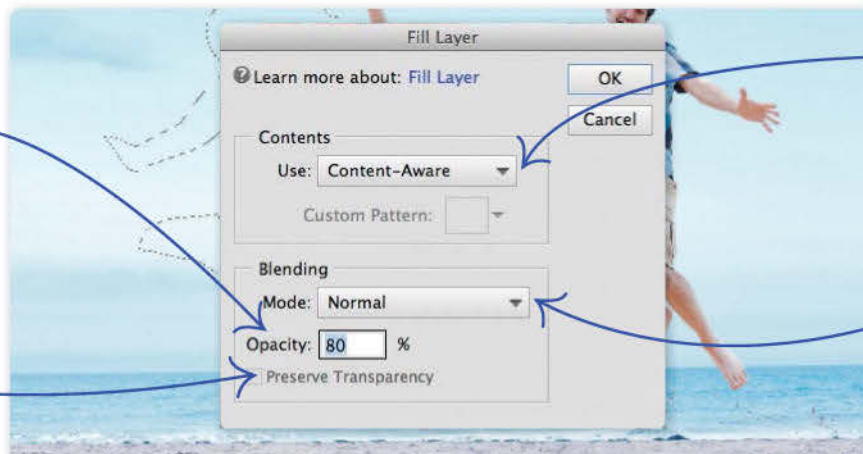
03 Content Aware might perfectly remove the subject, as it has done here, if the background is plain, but you might have to use the Clone tool yourself to just touch up. Be aware to remove any shadows too – that's a mistake waiting to happen!

ALTER THE OPACITY

Change the opacity for full control of exactly how filled-in your selection becomes.

PRESERVE TRANSPARENCY

If your layer isn't fully opaque, that doesn't matter. Elements will intelligently fill in to the opacity of the layer.



SELECT CONTENT AWARE

Select Content-Aware from the drop-down list – you can even fill in with a solid colour or pattern if you prefer.

BLENDING MODE

Choose the blend mode you'd like to fill with. Maybe you want your selection to be the colour of the background.

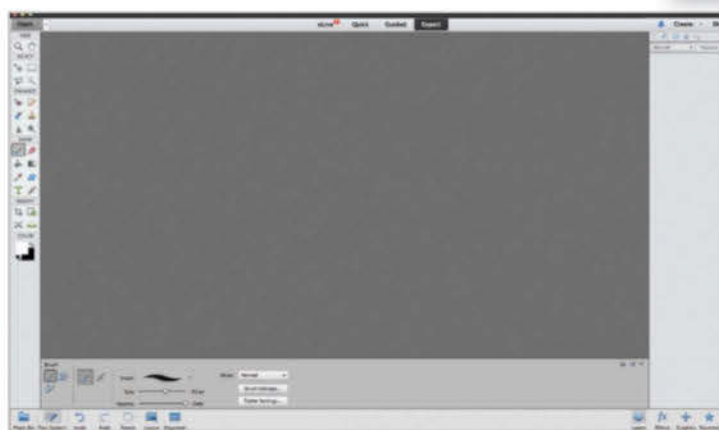
Technique 2

Merge your photos

Choose the best from each of your photos!

In the past, you would take two photos of everything in case one didn't develop. Nowadays, we hold the shutter button down so that we have countless shots to choose from.

However, what if you want one face from one photo, another face from another, and so on? Well, Elements offers a tool specifically for that kind of conundrum. Photomerge lets you make a choice.



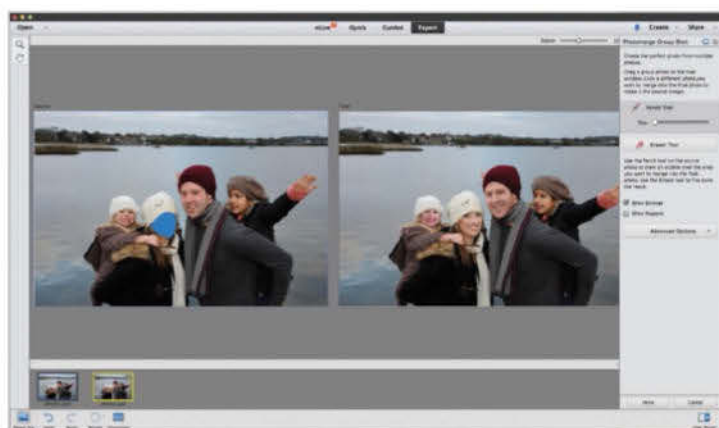
Open photos

01 You'll need two or more photos for this tutorial, ideally taken in quick succession. Head to the Open button at the top left or drag your photos into Elements to begin – there's no limit to the number of shots you can edit.



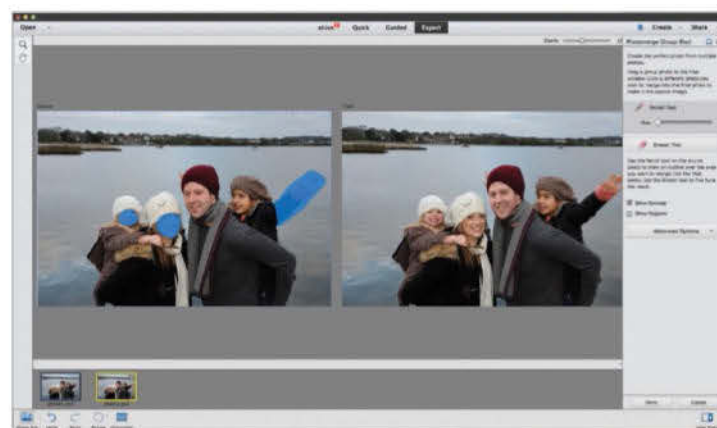
Photo bin

02 Head to the bottom-left of the screen and click on the Photo Bin option. This will show every photo you have open. Head to Enhance>Photomerge>Photomerge Group Shot – this is where you'll begin the merging.



Choose the best of everything

03 Drag one of your photos onto the right-hand panel and click on the other one to place it on the left. With the pencil selected, brush over the left-hand photo, what you want to replace in the right-hand one.



Continue to brush

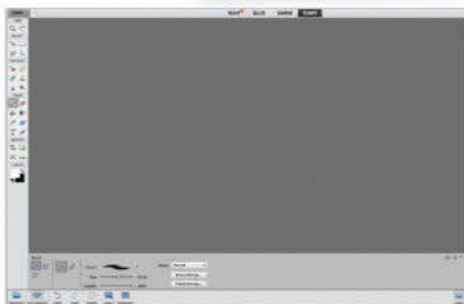
04 Pick and choose exactly what you want from each photo, and continue to brush and erase until you build up your perfect picture on the left-hand side. You can always do this with as many pictures as you wish.

Technique 3

Paste a face

Go manual with photo merging and have more control

Now that we've explored the possibilities of Photomerge, you've probably realised the drawback – you can only merge faces if the faces are in a similar position in every shot. That's fine if you've taken lots of pictures from the same position, but if you haven't, you're going to need to manually paste one face over another one. That's no problem though, as this tutorial will guide you through how to do it.



Open photos

01 Just like with the photomerge, you're going to need more than one photo to do this. Head to the Open button, or drag your images into Elements. Again, you might want the best from more than two photos, but that is completely up to you.



Mix the two photos

02 Choose the photo with the face that you want to replace and paste it into the original. Change the Opacity to 50% so that you can see both of them together and assess whether the two of them will merge well enough as a pair.



Resize your image

03 Resize the photo that you've pasted in. The reduced Opacity will help you line up the facial features. Try and get the eyes to match up exactly and don't worry too much about the rest of the picture, as most of it can be erased. Increase the Opacity back to 100%.



Create a mask

04 Create a mask. Press the Mask button (the blue rectangle with the clear circle in it) and press Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert the mask. None of the pasted image should be showing. Choose a big, soft white brush and start brushing through to reveal the features.



Resize again

05 Go through step 3 once again just to make sure that the two photos align a little more evenly. It will become clear when you're brushing through the features exactly what needs to be re-aligned. This will ensure the new photo looks realistic.



Perfect it

06 Brush what you want to replace. In this instance, we've replaced the groom's squint with a better shot of his eyes, so we've brushed through most of his face. The similarity between the two photos allows for seamless merging!

Enhance eyes and teeth

Touch up your photos to really make your subjects stand out from the crowd

Practically every photo can be improved with a quick amendment here and there, no matter how meticulous you are when you shoot the snap. It's perhaps no surprise that usually the most edited photos are the ones that people edit of themselves.

However, while most people assume that teeth-whitening and eye-correction is to improve what a subject naturally lacks, that is not always the case. Warming filters and lomo edits can turn teeth a yellowy colour, and bad lighting can dramatically affect eyes. Quite often, the key to photo fixes is in the name – most of the time you have to fix the photo, not the subject.

Enhancing facial features in photos can be wildly creative. You may choose to brush spectrums of colour into a subject's face or straighten every individual tooth inside their mouth. However, whether you're ambitious or just after a quick, simple touch-up, these are the techniques that all Photoshop users need in their photo-fix toolbox. Here, we will look at a couple of choice tips to help improve your portraits. Whether it is on an image of yourself or of someone else, experiment and see what you can do.

WORK ON THE EYES

Often bad lighting, filters and edits can affect the eyes, so experiment with what looks best.

What does it mean?

DODGE TOOL – The Dodge tool is paired with the Burn tool and both are used to alter exposure on the chosen point of an image: Dodge lightens and Burn darkens. They're used a lot during digital painting and picture fixing, but the Dodge tool is perfect for amending dark or off-colour teeth and eyes.

WHITEN THE SMILE

Whitening teeth is a popular change to make when editing portraits. Here, we have subtly removed the yellow tint.

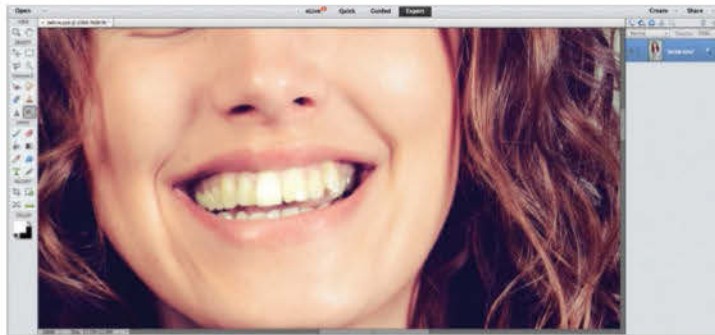
Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied file



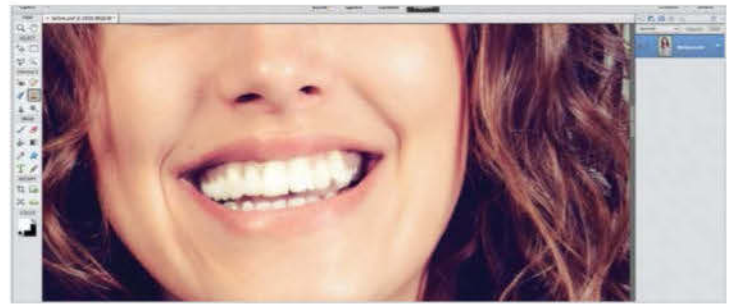
Whiten teeth

Get a perfect smile with the Dodge tool



Dodge teeth

01 The Dodge tool is great for the whites of eyes and the enamel of teeth. It whitens subtly and by gently brushing over the yellowy parts of a smile, you can transform a photo. Keep the Exposure at 50% and the range as Midtones for best results on teeth.

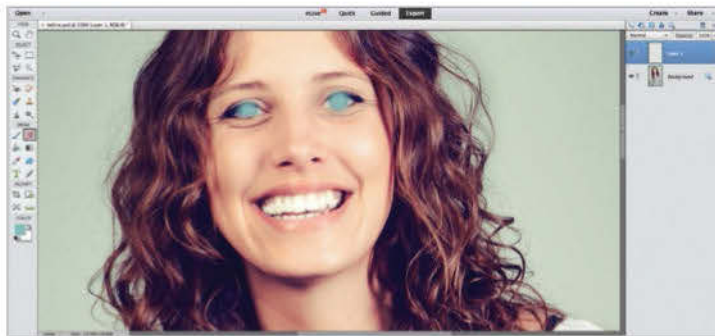


Repair the chip

02 If there's a slight chip in the subject's teeth, that's as easily fixable as the colouring. Select the Clone tool and press Opt/Alt on the edge of a straighter tooth. Now draw over the chip and you can re-create exactly the edge. In fact, there's nothing stopping you from cloning every tooth to be identical as well.

Boost eyes

Use colouring methods to improve the irises



Brush eyes

01 To improve the colour of a subject's eyes, pick a soft brush and paint over them on a new layer. Be sure to erase any bleed from the brush so that you're only painting the irises, and choose a colour with a greyish tint, as too bright a brush will look too obviously edited.



Eye highlights

02 Reduce the Opacity of this layer and set the blend mode to Color. This layer's Opacity is completely up to you to decide, depending on the brightness of the eyes. Pick a colourful tint and choose a smaller brush to add dabs of colour to give more tone.

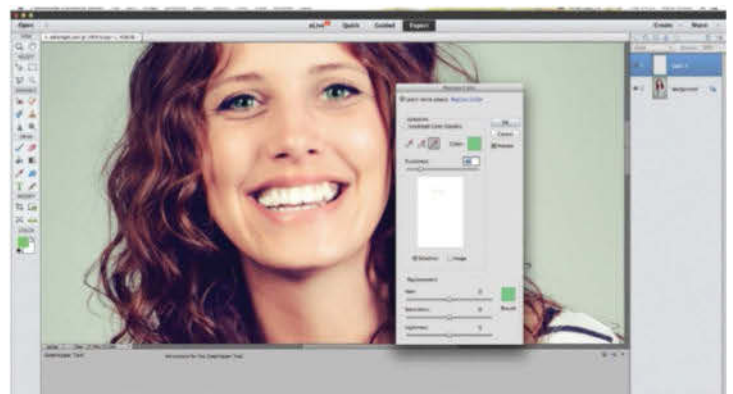
Extra enhancements

If you're feeling extra-ambitious



Screen layer

To add extra shine, create a new layer and lightly brush in with colour. Use white on the teeth and whatever colour the eyes are. Add a small Gaussian Blur to this layer and set it to Screen before reducing the Opacity. This can look unnatural unless done subtly, but it adds a nice glimmer to the eyes.



Change the eye colour

If you don't want to brush a new colour over the eyes and prefer to stick to the original tones of the photo, go to Enhance>Adjust Color. You can eye-drop the colours in the eyes from here to select them and use the Hue slider to change the overall colour.

Fix closed-eyes shots

Use Elements to get the very best out of each of your portrait shots

In the olden days of analogue photography, you had to take lots of photos just to get the perfect shot. With limited film and often no exact idea as to how your picture had turned out, it was common to always take another picture, just in case the subject closed their eyes in the first one.

Though we have digital cameras now, Elements can fix any picture in which the subject has closed their eyes. By taking lots of pictures and editing the best aspects of each together, it's no longer essential to be quite so perfection-seeking when taking photos; it's so easy to make it look realistic too, that you'd never even know it had been edited.

Of course, there's no limit to this kind of editing if you have lots of pictures at your disposal. By using the following techniques, you can correct the eyes in your pictures, but also fix windswept hair, mouths, or any other feature; use Photomerge for basic replacement, cloning for combining features and copy and pasting for controlled editing. Let's look a little deeper at how to fix the eyes in your pictures.

ADJUSTMENTS

A final adjustment can finish off the picture and hide edges in your editing. Go to Filter>Adjustments>Photo Filter.

What does it mean?

PHOTOMERGE – Photomerge is a feature added to Elements 13, and can stitch together pictures, whether you wish to create a panorama, fix exposure, or choose the best aspects from a series of pictures. You can also use this tool to create what Elements calls 'Funny faces' with various features.

PICK SIMILAR ANGLES

Choose photos that were taken at similar, if not identical angles. This will make your life easier when editing parts together.

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

Start images



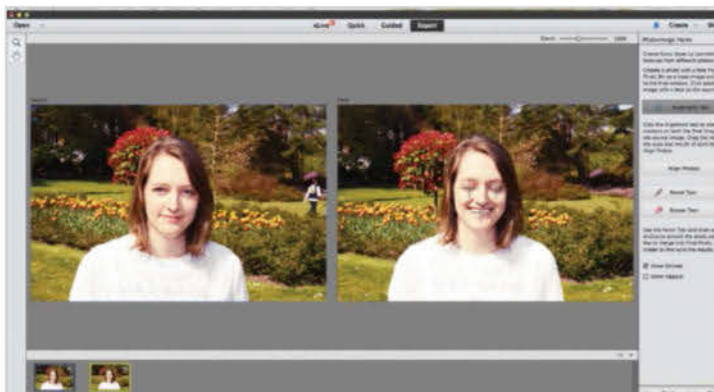
Technique 1

Use Elements Photomerge Select the best of everything with just a few simple clicks



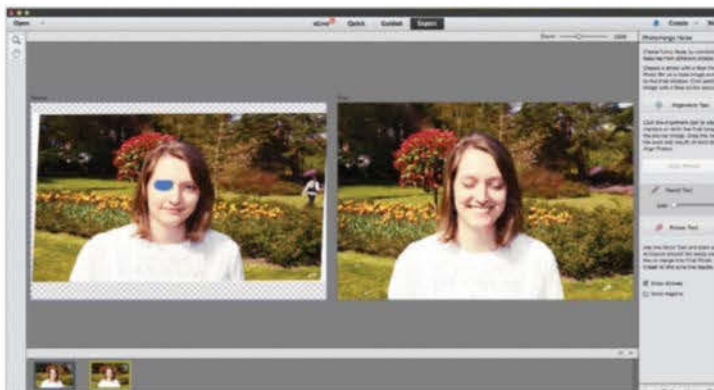
Head to Photomerge Faces

01 Open the pictures you want to pick the best features from; we're going for the ones with the best smile and eyes. In the bottom-left corner of Elements, you'll see the Photobin icon: click this to see them all lined up. Head to Enhance>Photomerge>Photomerge Faces.



Use the Alignment tool

02 Drag your pictures to each window: the one with the eyes open on the left-hand side. With the Alignment tool, drag the crosshairs to each of the eyes and the mouth for each picture, and then click Align Photos.



Pencil in the eyes

03 Use the Pencil tool to draw over the eyes that you want to place on the right-hand photo. As you've aligned your pictures, the open eyes should appear perfectly in place of the closed eyes. Click Done to Finish.

Closer look

Perfect portraits with Photomerge

Photomerge Faces

Create funny faces by combining facial features from different photos.

Choose a photo with a face from the Photo Bin as a base image and drag it to the final window. Click another image with a face as the source Image.

Alignment Tool

Click the Alignment tool to place three markers on both the final Image and the source Image. Drag the marker to the eyes and mouth of each face. Click Align Photos.

Align Photos

Pencil Tool

Size:

Eraser Tool

Use the Pencil Tool and draw an enclosure around the areas you would like to merge into Final Photo. Use the Eraser to fine tune the results.

☒ Show Strokes
☐ Show Regions

Done Cancel

ALIGNMENT TOOL

Use the set of crosshairs to help bring your pictures into line. There are three available for you to line up with three of the picture's facial features.

ALIGN PHOTOS

Clicking on the Align Photos button bends your first photo so it will fit the alignment points with the features in the second photo.

PENCIL TOOL

Use the Pencil tool to brush over the features that you want to keep in the first picture and then they will then appear in the second picture.

ERASER TOOL

Select and then use the Eraser to gently retouch the edges of where you've just brushed with the Pencil. This will help tidy up the edges, making the end result appear more realistic.

Technique 2 Clone features

If you have similar pictures of varying qualities, the obvious answer might be to clone the best features of some into one photo. The Clone tool is absolutely perfect for so many portrait edits, but one of

its most underrated features is that it works across different pictures: you can select a source on one picture and clone to another using these steps.



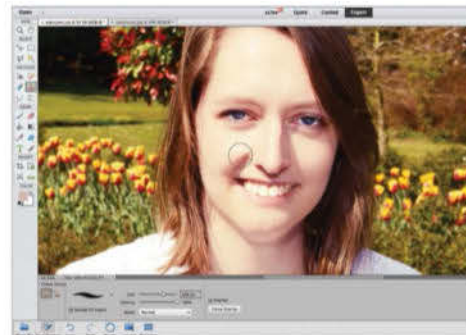
Set your source

01 Open both your open-eyes image and your closed-eyes image; we're going to clone the better mouth to the open eyes image, as that's also an option when merging pictures. Alt/Opt-click on the mouth.



Position the crosshair

02 Go to the other document. Line up the crosshair with the other features and click to align it. Now whatever you clone, it aligns with the other image. Make sure the Overlay button is checked so you can see both pictures alongside one another.



Brush lightly

03 Create a new layer and use the Clone tool to lightly sweep over the area that you want to replace. You can do this on a low opacity, but be careful to brush completely and cleanly, should you do so.



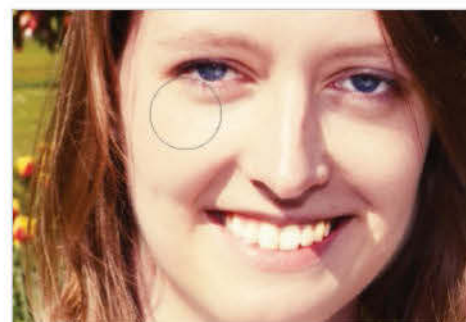
Touch up surrounding areas

04 If you're cloning a new mouth over the original picture, clone the entire mouth and not just the smile. If you're cloning eyes, watch out for the surrounding areas. Compare with other photos to make sure you're maintaining realism.



Match source with original

05 One trick to make sure you're cloning in the right place is to change the blend mode of the layer you're editing. Difference and Exclusion are great for showing the pixels you're editing.



Mask to finish

06 When your clone work is complete, click the Mask icon. With a soft black brush, erase any excess cloning that may infringe over the parts of the original picture that you want to keep.

What other facial edits can I make?

Use these techniques to fix any photo



Strands of hair

Often, wisps of hair hanging over the forehead of your subject can be distracting. Use the Clone Stamp to clone areas of the forehead – and even cheeks – over the stray hairs, and create a cleaner look.



Head straightening

Sometimes a subject's head can look crooked, and if you have more than one picture, you can pick the straightest-looking one. Use a combination of the copy-and-paste technique, along with some cloning, to align a head.

Technique 3

Select copy and paste

Mask the best bits of your portraits for full control

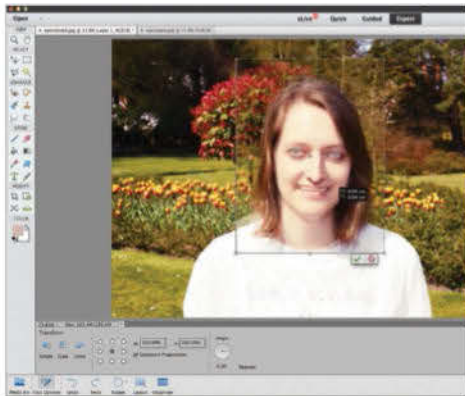
If Photomerge seems a little restricting, and cloning can be difficult to pull off unless your pictures are perfectly lined up, masking can be the easiest way to fix closed eyes on a picture.

It's a simple copy-and-paste job, but check out how to make the most out of this simple technique, with the following steps.



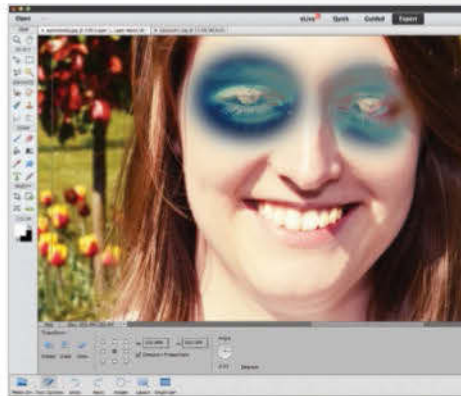
Make a selection

01 Again, open both the eyes-open picture and the eyes-closed picture. Go to the eyes-open one and make a selection around the head. Ctrl/right-click and choose Layer Via Copy, then Ctrl/right-click the layer and choose Duplicate. Duplicate to your other image.



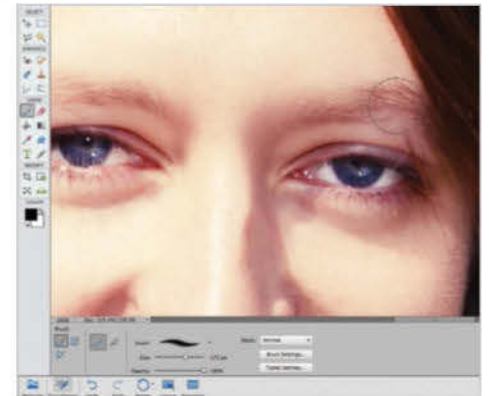
Align images

02 With both photos now in the same picture, we're going to need to line them up. Reduce the Opacity setting of the pasted head to 50% and move until the main features, such as the eyes and the corners of the mouth, align.



Mask and match

03 Click the mask icon, and press Cmd/Ctrl+I to turn the mask black. Select a soft white brush and lightly brush over the eyes, before Ctrl+right-clicking the layer and using Free Transform to reposition. Use blend modes again to realign.



Touch up

04 Finally, use a smaller brush on the mask to just retouch the picture slightly. In this case, there's a wisp of hair over one of the eyes that can be erased lightly from the picture; you might want to use a 50% Opacity brush to do this.



Face-swapping

Face-swapping is a fun, novelty trick; though the Clone Stamp is perhaps the obvious choice, duplicate your image twice, and mask so your two subjects have the opposite faces placed over them.



Mouths

As mentioned in the tutorial, it can sometimes be easier to swap a mouth over than eyes. Any of the techniques can make this edit, but Photomerge is especially useful: just brush over the mouth to replace.

Touch up blemishes

Correct sweat, red skin and dark circles with some simple editing techniques

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

Skin is perhaps the most famously retouched element in Photoshop; in fact, if you are to use the word Photoshop as a verb, the chances are you'll be talking about smoothing over a subject's appearance to porcelain-like levels.

Actually trying to touch-up a subject's skin, though, might be more difficult to manage than you first imagine. There's the texture to consider, and everything needs to remain subtle. If you try playing with the highlights and shadows too much, you can create excess wrinkles in the face. If you're not deft enough when brushing new colour onto a subject, you can create an unnatural-looking tone.

There are loads of creative ways that you can become a retouching master, though. The key is to keep referring back to your original picture in relation to your edited project – use the eye icons in the Layers panel – to get an idea of how your picture's changing. Sometimes good edits can be the subtlest ones; but the best ones are always the pictures that you don't even realise have been edited. Check out how to remove dark circles around eyes, excess sweat and red marks with our top tips.

ADDING MAKE UP

If your subject's face looks pale, add make-up by adding a new layer of low opacity, set to Saturation and brush pink onto it.



What does it mean?

SOFT FOCUS – Soft focus is actually a photography flaw. It's caused by a round lens blurring a picture too far, but it's perfect when trying to hide retouching edits, as it gives an even smoothness to skin. Try it out with your portraits to create a dreamy look, and to hide the blotchier parts of your image.

ALL-OVER FIX

If you only have a few red patches, it's best to brush your new colour all over your subject to get even coverage.



Technique 1

Alleviate red skin patches

Use recolouring techniques to fix red marks and sunburn

It's important that skin tone looks natural and healthy in your subject's face, and over-redness is a common problem, especially after you've added a retro filter.

When you want to recolour a monochrome picture, you tend to use a brush and some subtle painting to instil a little hue to the picture. This is exactly what we're going to do here. Check out how to do it in six steps.



Eyedrop some colour

01 Start off by picking a foundation colour that you're going to apply to your subject. Grab the Eyedropper and select a light but not too saturated shade from a place on your subject's face that hasn't been affected by the redness.



Paint some colour

02 Add a new layer. Grab the Brush tool, select soft edges and begin brushing lightly to paint your selected colour over the redness of your subject's face. Don't be afraid to encroach slightly on hairlines, but don't brush over the eyes or lips of your subject.



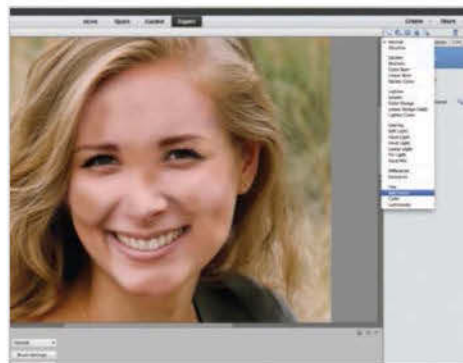
Blend

03 Set your layer blend mode to Color. Each of the colour blend modes have a slightly different function, but Color is the best one for an all-round colour change to build on with more shades over the top. Turn Opacity down to 80%.



Dodge some highlights

04 On your original background layer of the subject, select the Dodge tool, and just lightly touch in places that you feel would benefit from subtle highlights. This will give your subject's face more tone and help with adding more colour in a minute.



Add more shades

05 Add a new layer. With your brush selected, paint more colours subtly over the face in different places, using the Opt/Alt key to select a shade before painting it on. Set this layer to Saturation and reduce the Opacity again to 80%.



Complete with a soft focus

06 Press Cmd/Ctrl+Alt/Opt+Shift+E to create a new merged layer of the entire picture at the top of the layer stack. Set this layer to Screen, reduce to 50% and then go to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur to add a slight soft focus and just smooth over the face.

Technique 2

Fix dark circles

Correct bags under eyes and smooth over a subject's face

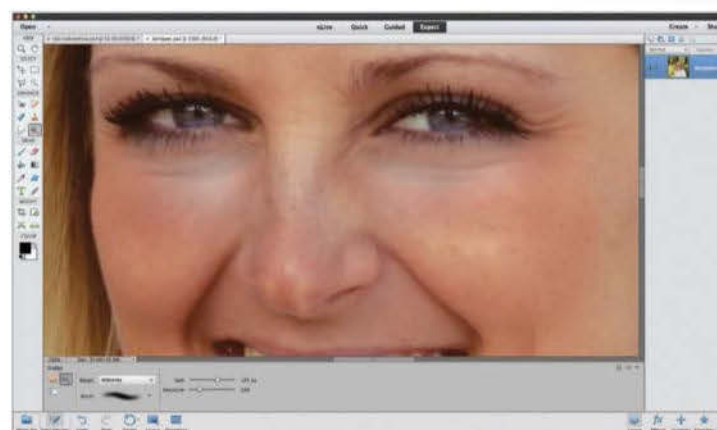
A subject with dark shadows under his or her eyes is common in photography. Of course, it can be because the model's tired or not wearing make-up, but all too often, it's a lighting issue as much as anything.

By dodging and editing a subject's eyes though, you can easily erase dark circles around eyes. It's a handy edit, and one you might employ more often than you think.



Grab the Dodge

01 Visit the left-hand panel of Elements, and find the Dodge and Burn tools. The Dodge is used to lighten up the highlights in a picture and Burn is used to darken. Choose Dodge, and select an Exposure of 25% – this is subtle enough to work with on your subject.



Dodge the dark patches

02 Rather than brushing over the dark patches under the eyes, try just lightly clicking in the places that the subject needs less prominence. Don't worry about the colour turning colourless, as we're going to fix this; just match the tone of how the face should look.



Clone some colour over

03 Select the Clone Stamp tool. Now use the Opt/Alt key to select a source on the cheek of your subject and then set the Opacity to 25% again. Now very lightly brush in the colour and texture just beneath the eyes.



Burn over again

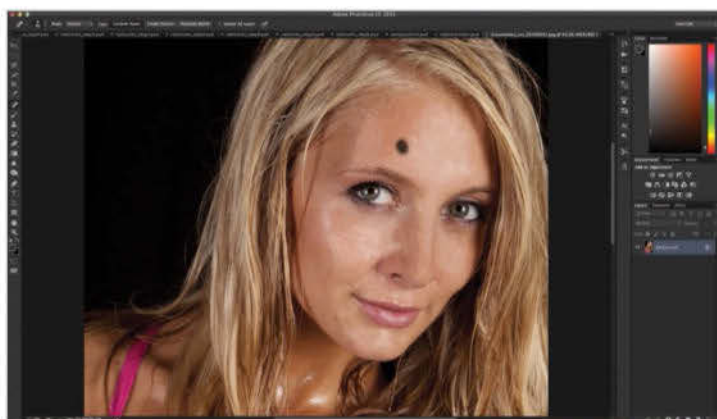
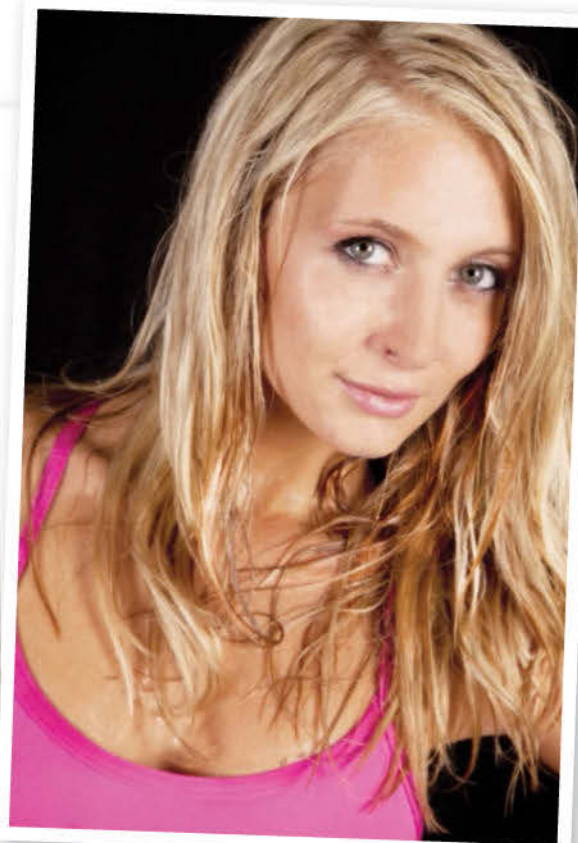
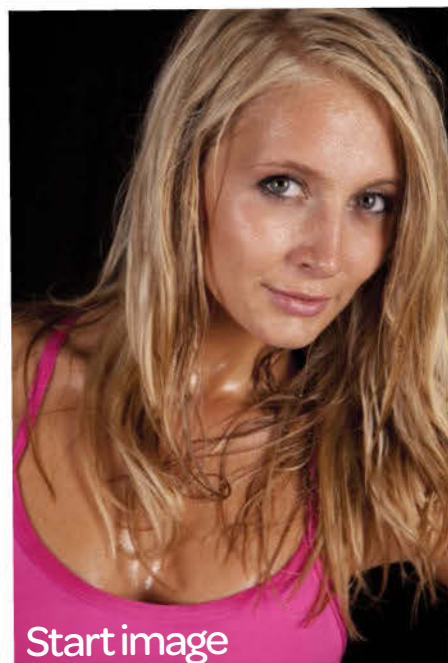
04 With this complete, the eyes might look slightly too light now. Use the Burn tool, again at 25% Exposure for maximum control, to bring in a little natural shade to the eyes. Again, repeat until you're happy with the final result.

Technique 3

Remove sweat

Get rid of droplets quickly with the Spot Healing Brush

The 2015 edition of Elements has produced some welcome updates to the retouching tools. Adobe claims to have sped up the Spot Healing Brush and Patch tool by 120 times, which means you no longer have to wait for their effects to load up as you're working. But how can you benefit from the super-speedy Spot Healing Brush? Well, how about using it to remove excess sweat in your pictures?

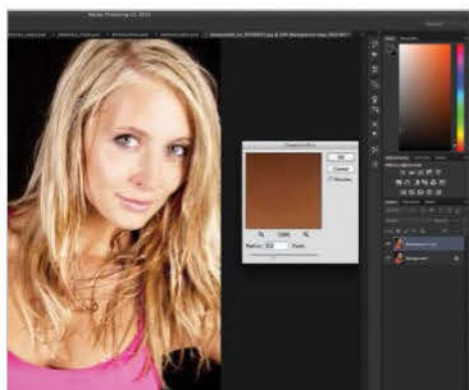


Spot heal

01 Grab the Spot Healing Brush and begin simply clicking over the various sweat drops on your subject's face. This will start erasing the droplets and generally smooth the face. Remove the excess of sweat from the forehead, and tap over the shinier patches of skin.

Dodge around the hair

02 Select the Dodge tool and set the Exposure to 25%. Start brushing over the darker strands of hair to lighten them up slightly; this will alleviate the wet-hair look, and give less of a sweaty finish to your subject.



Add a soft focus

03 Finally, duplicate your layer, and set to Screen. Head to Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur and add a slight blur over the image to smooth over the blotchier sections of skin, and just lighten the subject.



SPOT HEALING BRUSH

The Spot Healing Brush is similar to the Healing Brush, only it doesn't need a sampled area to work.

HEALING BRUSH

The Healing Brush is similar to the Clone tool; it samples another area and replicates the colour and texture of its source.

RED EYE TOOL

A tool for portraits, Red Eye does exactly what its name suggests; it removes red eyes from subjects.

CONTENT-AWARE MOVE

Another tool with a recent update, Content-Aware Move compares pixels in an image to intelligently fill blank spaces.

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

MIMIC TONE

Make sure that you vary the shades and hues of the hairs that you are adding to the beard if you want it to feel realistic.

STUDY SUBJECTS

Take a look at people with facial hair in order to give you a better idea of where it should sit on your subjects.

Remove or add facial hair

Use brushes and cloning in Elements to have full control over beards

Hair is famously difficult to select, but it's a lot easier to edit and create facial hair on a subject. While there are theoretically plenty of ways to create a beard, one of the easiest is a less obvious choice. By creating a brush and adjusting the Scattering and Spacing in its settings, you can paint hair over a subject in a matter of seconds, without having to individually place every single hair.

Getting rid of a beard is just as simple. The Clone Stamp can be used for all sorts of photo-fix edits, but it's a great option when it comes to replicating hairless skin in a bearded area.

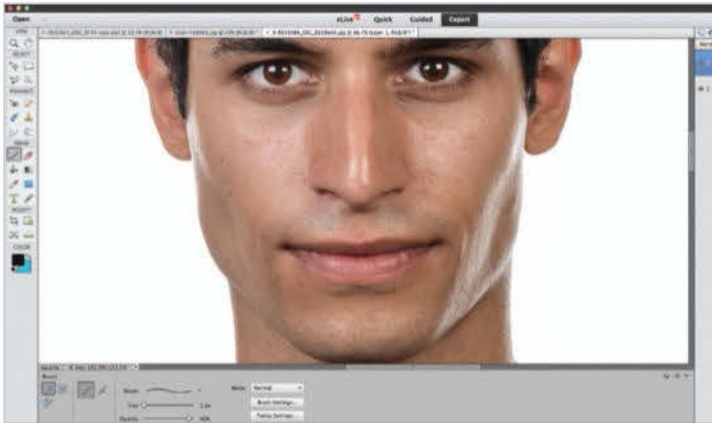
By learning the first two techniques of adding and removing stubble, you can reshape the facial hair on just about any subject. With a little help from the third tutorial, you might choose to replace the facial hair in a subject or change the style of beard completely. So while it may seem like a tricky task to work with hair, facial hair need not be. Read on and discover how to take control of beards with our top tips and techniques.

Start image



Technique 1 Add facial hair

Give a subject a beard by duplicating a single hair



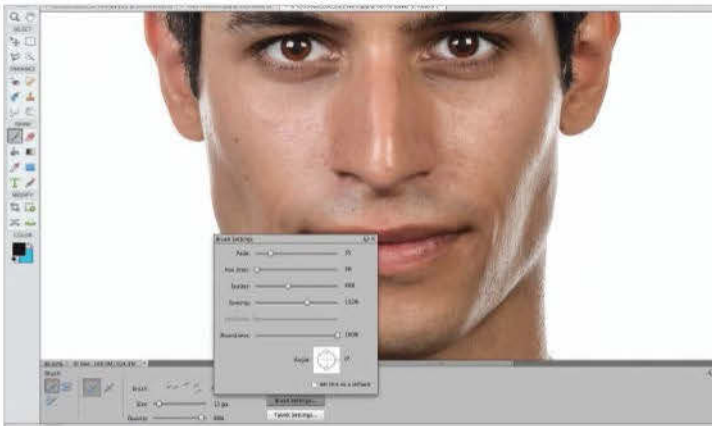
Draw your first hair

01 Start off by using the Eyedropper tool to select the colour of your facial hair. Pick your colour from the hair or eyebrows for this with a brush of about 2 pixels and make a small stroke to create a single hair, on a new layer.



Save as a brush

02 Hold Cmd/Ctrl and click the preview of the layer. This will select only the pixels you've brushed with. Go to Edit>Define Brush from Selection and choose a name for your new custom brush. This is what you're going to use to paint the facial hair with.



Adjust brush settings

03 Before we start using the brush, we must change the settings so that the brush scatters hairs across the face, and not just in clumps. Set the Fade to 35, Hue Jitter to 2%, Scatter to 40% and Spacing to 152%.



Start brushing

04 With this new brush, paint a little in the direction of wherever the brush points; adjust the angle in Brush Settings to change this, and tweak the Roundness of the brush to change the size of the brush slightly.



Brush in different directions

05 Change the angle of the brush and start painting in different directions around the mouth and cheeks according to where the hair in that area grows. Remember hair above the lips grows outwards, and hair on cheeks and below the chin grows downwards.



Finish and touch up

06 Complete the facial hair and use the Eraser to just lightly touch up any stray hairs that might have scattered away from the face. Reduce the layer's Opacity down to 90% to keep the hair subtle and even add a new layer for another shade if need be.

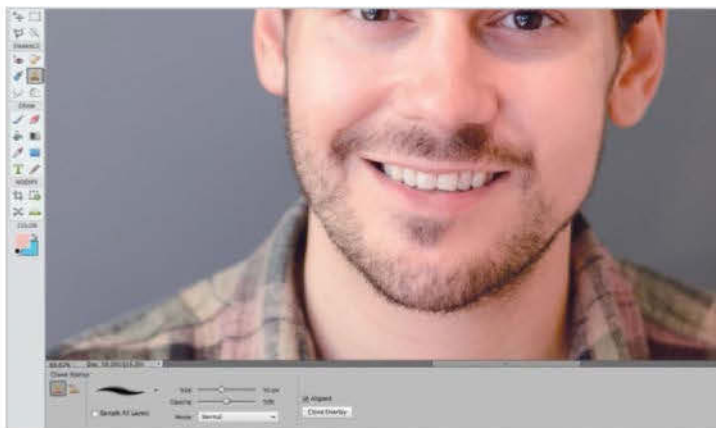
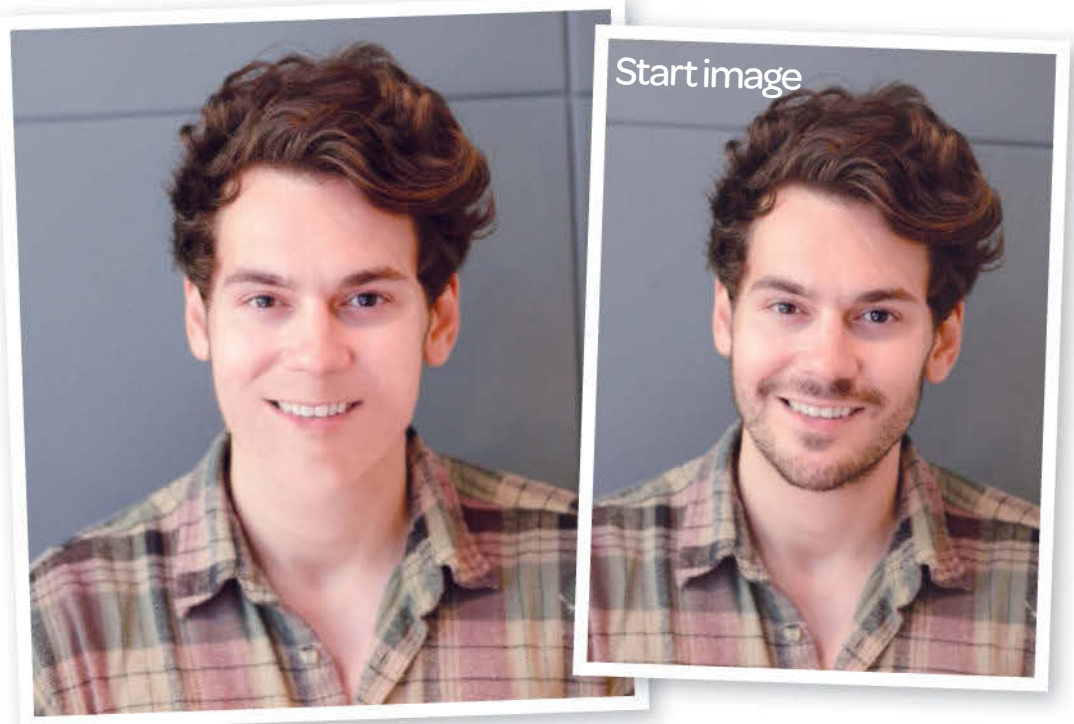
Technique 2

Remove facial hair

Shave a subject using the power of the Clone Stamp tool

Now that we've added some hair to a subject's face, what about when we want to take an image and try doing opposite?

Removing hair is just a simple photo fix for the Clone Stamp to handle; erasing an entire beard is a little more difficult. It's important to be subtle with opacity and brush size of the Clone Stamp tool in order to keep a natural finish.



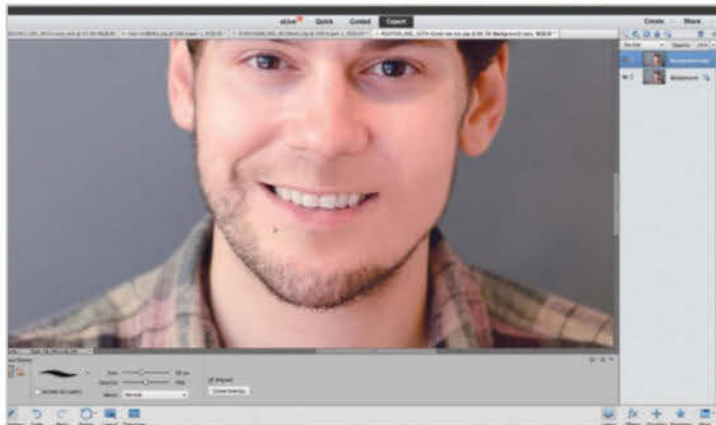
Begin cloning

01 Begin by selecting the Clone Stamp tool and gently cloning from the cheek over the facial hair. Use Alt/Opt to select a patch of skin, and set the Opacity to 50% to make small strides with it, so that you don't clone too much at once.



Clone bigger areas

02 Start cloning bigger areas by increasing the size of the brush. It will look patchy to begin with, but we're going to fix that in a minute; just make sure you copy the colour, light and shade to keep the face looking natural.



Smooth over

03 With an even bigger brush and an Opacity of just 20%, clone big areas over the patchier parts of the face to even and smooth out the skin texture. You might even want to fetch the Dodge and Burn tools, just to touch up the shading on the newly-shaved areas.



Give a soft focus

04 Merge your entire picture into a new layer (Cmd/Ctrl+Alt/Opt+Shift+E) and add a Gaussian Blur of 8 pixels by going to Filter>Blur. Set layer to Screen and reduce the Opacity to 50%. This will give another overall smoothing to finish off your image.

Technique 3

Add and remove

Combine both of the techniques to re-craft facial hair onto a subject

Now that you've mastered how to add and take away facial hair, use both techniques to fix up any subject. You might want to give a different style of beard as we've done here, but why not replace all the facial hair on a subject, to give them a light shave? The choice is yours.

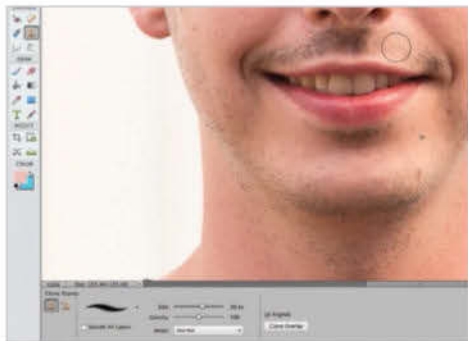


Start image



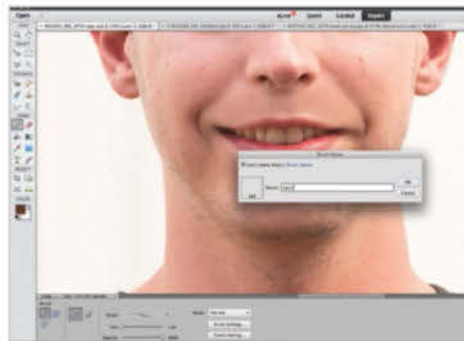
CLONE TEXTURE

The Clone Stamp is a very good tool for duplicating skin texture. To only duplicate colour, use a soft, round brush.



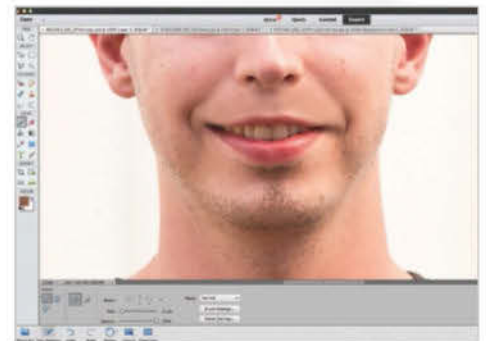
Clone

01 Remove the existing hair you want to by using the simple cloning technique from before. Clone patches from the cheek to the upper lip to retain the texture of the subject's face, and remember to keep a low opacity to avoid duplicating specific patches.



Create hair

02 On a new layer, create a single strand of hair as you have done before, select the layer's contents by Cmd/Ctrl+clicking the preview box and go to Edit>Define from Selection. Set the brush's Scatter at 40% and Spacing at 152% with Brush Settings.



Brush a beard

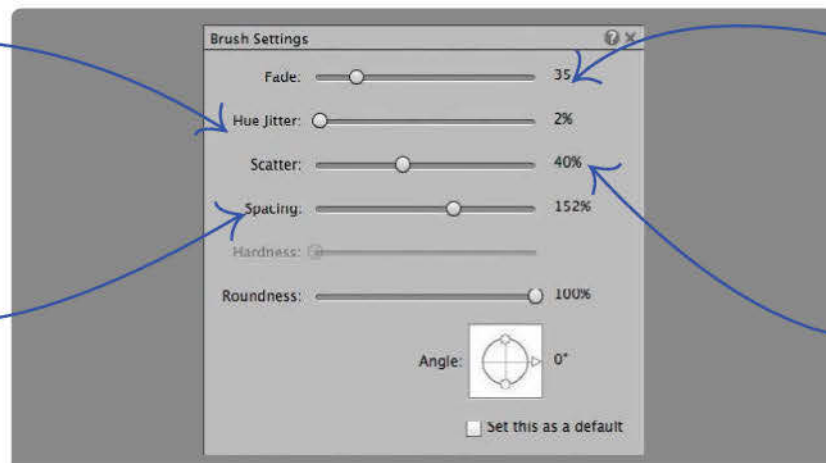
03 You may wish to brush over the space you've just cloned, as this way you can have complete control over every single facial hair. If you want to create a new beard, however, just brush as you would over the face, and tidy with the Eraser.

HUE JITTER

Choose to vary the hue of your strokes as you scatter them across the subject.

SPACING

Spacing sets the distance between the scattered brush strokes according to the brush's size.



FADE

Fade determines how many brush strokes will be clear and opaque before they fade away.

SCATTER

Scatter your brush strokes instead of placing them in crowded clumps over one area.

What does it mean?

PLANE – The plane is the set space of your perspective. It has parallel lines running through it for you to align with objects in your picture, meaning that you can perfectly bring your pasted image into line with the vanishing point in your picture. The plane will turn red if you try and set an impossible angle.

BLEND FOR REALISM

Remember to use blending techniques, such as filters and masking to make your picture look as real as possible on its background.

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files



Add perspective effects to your photos

Master the illusion of distance with this simple perspective tool

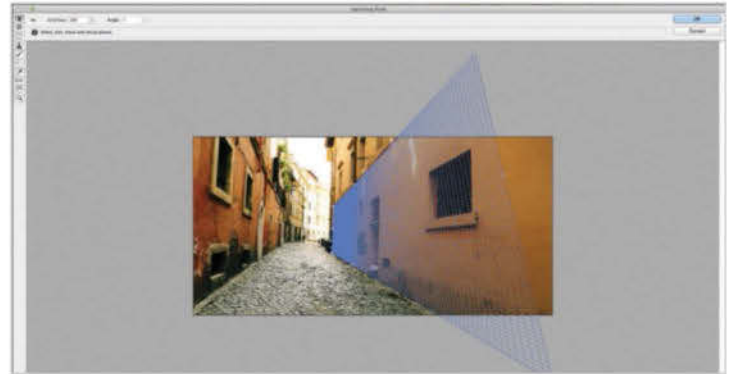
Ask any artist what one of the most important components in a successful sketch is, and they will most likely say perspective. When you sketch a picture, perspective offers you depth and distance that give the illusion of a three-dimensional image. Get the perspective wrong, and an image will never look right, no matter how good the artist is. And perspective is just as important in Photoshop if you want to give the impression that your picture is real.

When you transform images to fit onto backgrounds, usually you will hit Cmd/Ctrl+T to transform the image and skew it into place.

However, using a vanishing point on the background of your image simply eliminates the need to do this; you transform where your image will sit before it's even pasted, and then there's no need to try and work out the perspective of the image itself.

When an artist sketches, they create grids of parallel lines in the direction of the distance, and then they draw the objects to fit this grid. This is essentially what the Vanishing Point filter does for you; it removes the hassle from working out a distance and gives you the guides you need to align everything perfectly.

Perfect the point Create the vanishing point with a filter

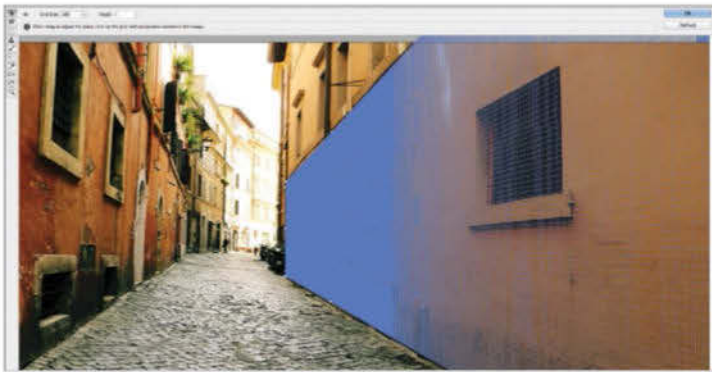


Pick your pictures

01 Start off by finding the two pictures that you want to create a vanishing point with. A vanishing point works best for a surface that isn't face-on with your viewpoint, such as a wall for you to paste something onto. Open both images in Photoshop – in our case, 'wall.psd' and 'beach.jpg' (available on the FileSilo).

Create the plane

02 Head to Filter>Vanishing Point. This is where you're going to skew the perspective for the vanishing point. Use the Create Plane Tool (C) to draw your four points over the perspective of the surface that you're adding 'beach.jpg' to. You don't have to drag; just align the four points in each of the corners.



Edit and tweak

03 With your vanishing plane in place, it's unlikely that you will have perfectly judged it first time. Resize the plane by using the handles on the straight sides, as the handles on the corner will skew the selection. The plane will only work when blue; if it is red, it means it is not possible to create this particular skew.

Paste on a new layer

04 Click OK in the filter, then open the image you want to paste onto the vanishing point. Copy this image, create a new layer, then head back to Filter>Vanishing Point. Paste your image, and it will appear skewed over the surface. Drag to move and it will re-skew itself to the shape of the plane. Click OK once satisfied.

Edits to remember Improve realism with these three tips



Masks

Masking is vital for many Photoshop projects, but when you're pasting a whole image onto a whole surface, it's important to retouch the edges of your image with a soft brush on a mask. This will soften harsh edges and help improve the realism.



Blend modes

Altering the blend mode of your pasted item along with the opacity will, as the name suggests, blend your image into its surface. Multiply is good for blending a logo with a white background, and Overlay is good for backgrounds with light and dark pixels.



Displace

If you want to achieve even more realism, why not displace your picture over the surface? Save your surface layer as a PSD, head to Filter>Distort>Displace and then select your PSD to press your pasted picture over all the bumps on the image.

“You'll be astounded at just what you can achieve by working with Elements' tools, filters and brushes”



Creative effects

Create impressive digital effects using brushes, filters and much more



- 92** **Add movement to your images**
Speed things up with these tricks
- 94** **Isolate colour**
Create striking colour effects
- 96** **Make a watermark**
Stamp your mark on images
- 98** **Create a custom lens flare effect**
Add colour and creativity
- 100** **Master the Harris Shutter effect**
Split colour channels
- 102** **Create a split tone effect**
Apply a classic finish to any photo
- 104** **Master tone and colour reversal**
Create psychedelic pictures
- 106** **Add a reflection to sunglasses**
Master this creative effect
- 108** **Create vibrant pop art**
Evoke the spirit of the Fifties
- 110** **Create a basket weave**
Brighten up ordinary photos
- 112** **Apply colourful make up**
Add a dash of colour to your pics
- 114** **Mimic film grain**
Apply a touch of noise
- 116** **Create a coloured mosaic effect**
Give a picture a colourful spin
- 118** **Paint with the Impressionist brush**
Release your inner painter

Creative effects

ZOOM BURST EFFECT

Add a sense of dynamism to your shots with the fantastic Zoom Burst Effect.

Before

FOCAL POINT

It is easy to select the area that you want to remain in focus.

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

Add movement to your images

Speed things up with these simple tricks using Photoshop Elements

Guided edits are basically programmed effects that provide the controls needed for adapting them around any image. There are loads to choose from, and they're organised by categories such as Touchups, Photo Effects and Photo Play. In version 12 of Photoshop Elements, we've seen the addition of a new Zoom Burst Effect. This creative effect helps us imitate a style of imagery created when a camera's lens is sharply moved in or out, in order to make a blurry barrel distortion effect. This will not only draw attention to the central subject, which becomes more prominent in the image, but it will also

enhance the sense of movement in the photo as a whole and make the image pop into life.

Moving into the Editor afterwards also means that we can further adapt the Guided effect to improve the final image. By calling upon some of the adjustments and enhancements found inside the Editor section, we can bring important details back in areas which might have been lost during the Guided editing. You can load up the start image we used by downloading it from FileSilo, or try the effect out on one of your own action shots.

Add movement

Use Guided edits for better images



Guided edits

01 We can use Elements' Guided effects to get this image underway. Open up the image, or one of your own, into Elements and click on the Guided tab. There will be a whole host of options, but the one we're most interested in is the Zoom Burst Effect.



Add blur

02 Inside the Guided edit, crop any extraneous bits off the image using the first box. Try to position the main subject in the centre. Click on the Add Zoom Burst button to apply a covering of blur.



Focus point

03 Use the Add Focus Area tool to draw areas of focus over the subject you want to keep in focus. Draw multiple lines until the subject is completely in focus and everything else is blurred. Press Cmd/Ctrl+Z to continually undo any mistakes in the process.



Control the blur

04 Apply a vignette using the last option and hit OK. Now head to the Expert section of Elements. There should be two layers visible to the right of the image. Reduce the Opacity of the top layer down to 80% to reduce the blurriness. Depending on your image, you may want to keep this set at 100%.



Improve lighting

05 Go to the Enhance menu and down to Adjust Lighting>Shadows/Highlights. In the dialog box, reduce Lighten Shadows to 0% (Elements automatically compensates for dark images), and increase Midtone Contrast to +70-80% to boost the image.

At a glance

Using a Guided edit to improve a shot

GUIDED PREVIEWS

Any edits that you make with a Guided edit, such as the Zoom Burst Effect, will always update the image in the central preview.



CROP TO SIZE

If the main subject isn't centrally cropped then there's a real risk that this effect might look out of place.

INSTANT EFFECTS

Blur is added using the Add Zoom Burst button. This applies an instant lens blur effect to the image, making it appear to be moving quickly.

Isolate colour

Use brushes and blend modes to create wonderfully striking colour effects in Elements

Colour is a much more powerful tool than a lot of people give it credit for, and creating colours that really pop in an image can be difficult. But when you have a vibrant image and you're looking for one subject or a particular shade to shine brighter than most, why not reduce the saturation completely of everything else in the picture?

In the Oscar-winning film *Schindler's List*, a girl's red coat was the only bright, colourful object in a monochrome world. It was an extremely powerful, evocative image, and it's one that's easy to create in Elements. It doesn't have to be used for such dramatic effect though; you might want to just draw attention to one thing in particular in your picture. You might even want to keep everything else in your picture semi-monochrome.

Play around with this effect in various pictures. It's one that you can be as creative with as you choose; why not use splatter brushes to let colour fly out of the subject? Try it out and see what you can create.

What does it mean?

LEVELS – Altering Levels can improve contrast, which is great for monochrome images. When you improve the contrast of a coloured picture, the hues can become overly saturated and look messy; improving the contrast in monochrome makes the blacks darker, and the whites lighter.

LEVELS ADJUSTMENT

Tweaking the lightness and darkness of your background will bring out the best of your coloured object without affecting its quality.

SOFT EDGES

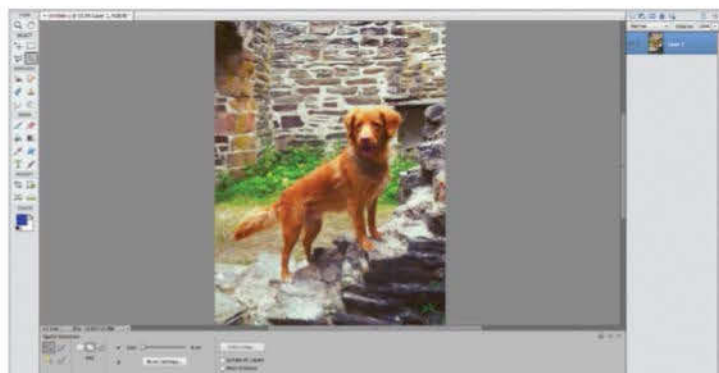
Refine Edge is great for fixing feathery edges, but so is a big soft brush with 50% Opacity. It will also give you more control.

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

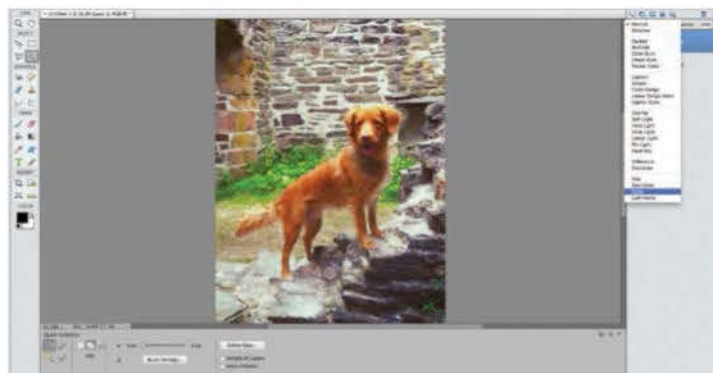


Activate the isolation Find your subject and grey out everything else



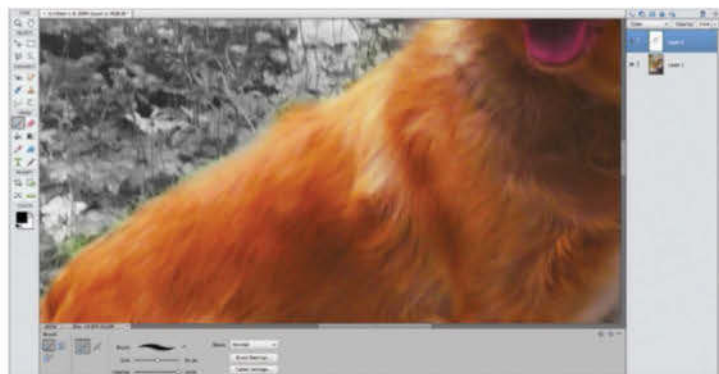
Make a selection

01 Start off by opening the image you want to isolate a colour or object in. Choose something with a bright foreground in front of a less exciting background. Grab the Quick Selection and drag it around your foreground to select it. Don't worry about being too precise when you select. Add a new layer.



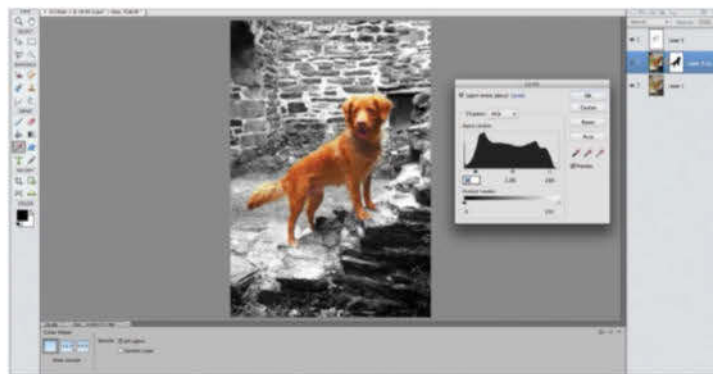
Fill and blend

02 With your object selected, Ctrl/right-click and hit Invert Selection. When you select black or white as your Foreground colour and press Alt/Opt+backspace now, you will fill in the background white. Change the blend mode of this layer to Color. This is your monochrome background to let your colourful foreground really show.



Touch up manually

03 You can refine your selection once you've made it, but it's just as easy to touch it up now; get a soft, white brush and a soft eraser, and toggle between the E and B keys, touching up your edges and perfecting exactly what's bright and colourful, and what's in the grey background.



Alter levels

04 Duplicate your background layer. Hold Cmd/Ctrl and click the preview of the layer with the brushed monochrome background. Hit the mask icon; you have a separate layer for your background. Head to Enhance>Adjust Lighting>Levels and tweak either side until your picture has a good contrast to complement the colour in the picture.

Alternative methods If you use Photoshop, try these other colour-controlling commands



Select colour

Head to Select>Color Range; use the eyedropper to select a colour to isolate. Use the plus and minus icons to refine. Click OK, then Ctrl/right-click and press Layer Via Copy to create a new layer from this colour. Create a grey-filled colour layer beneath this layer.



Channels

Click the Channels palette next to the Layers palette; here, your picture is split into red, blue and green. We want to isolate the blue, so click the blue layer, Cmd/Ctrl+A, copy and paste as a new layer. Set this layer to Darken, and the blue will be highlighted.



Hue/Saturation

Add a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer over your image. Decide which shade you want to keep, and then reduce all other colours to -100. Adjust your shades by using the spectrum sliders, to add or remove hues from the isolated space.



What does it mean?

DEFINE BRUSH FROM SELECTION
– You can turn anything into a brush using Photoshop or Elements, and most digital artists use the Define Brush From Selection feature to create painted strokes, textures or other interesting brushes for artwork. Remember that the feature doesn't recognise colour.

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

WHITE ON WHITE

White watermarks look subtler and classier, so a shadow is important to make them stand out clearly against white backgrounds.

Make a watermark

Stamp your mark all over your pictures and create watermarks in Elements

Artists, designers and photographers have all kinds of ways to make sure that their work is individual, not least of which is stamping their own style over their pictures. But sometimes you might want to go a little bit further, especially if you're creating a preview image, and that's when you can quite literally stamp your name over a picture.

Watermarks are often just seen as a way to prevent plagiarism of your work, but it's easy to forget that they can also be used as branding. Putting your own logo over your pictures might be an idea if

you're displaying them on your website, or uploading them to someone else's. You can create any kind of logo in any colour too, and then overlay it on your picture with a low opacity if you want to keep it subtle.

Check out our four-step guide, and once you've created your watermark, why not save a bit of time and turn it into a brush? This way, you can simply add your watermark to any picture, whenever you choose, with just a single click.

Make your mark Use shapes, logos and layer styles to create watermarks



Add lines

01 Open the picture you want to add a watermark to, and select the Shape tool on the left-hand panel. Click the line option and set the width; fairly light should be enough, so pick anywhere between 5 and 20px. Drag two white lines from one corner to the next to form a cross like we have here.



Insert your logo

02 Paste the logo for your watermark into your picture. Make sure that it is white to match the lines that you've created already, and that the logo is cut out from its background. Drag it to the centre; use the central marker in the selection to align it with the intersection of where the two lines cross.



Create a drop shadow

03 Click on your logo layer. Go to Layer>Layer Style>Style Settings and add a Drop Shadow of Size: 100, Distance: 5 and Opacity: 25. Click OK. Now Ctrl/right-click this layer, click Copy Layer Style, Ctrl/right-click the other two layers and hit Paste Layer Style. This will add this exact drop shadow to every layer.



Mask away excess

04 With the watermark almost complete, we just need to get rid of the lines' intersection behind the logo. Hit the mask icon on both Shape layers and pick a big, black brush the size of your logo – either soft or hard, depending on the effect you want. Move your brush to the centre of the picture and click to erase.

Turn your watermark into a brush Add this watermark to any picture instantly



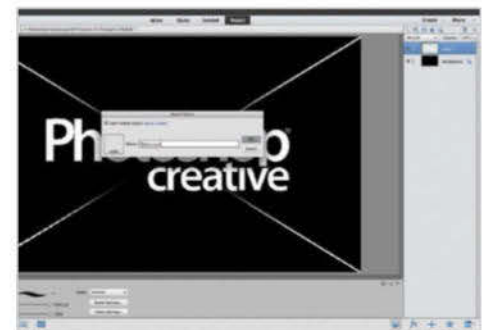
Remove layer styles

01 Let's prepare the watermark for turning into a brush and remove the drop shadows, as brushes don't have layer styles. Start off by double-clicking the FX icon on each layer and unchecking the Drop Shadow option to turn it off each layer.



Merge everything

02 Next, merge each of the layers you want to create a watermarked brush of; this is both line layers and the logo layer. We're going to create our brush from a selection, so this will simply make it easy to select everything.



Define as brush

03 Cmd/Ctrl+click the merged layer's preview window to select all the pixels on that layer. Go to Edit>Define Brush From Selection, and give your watermark a name. Now, whenever you want to add a watermark, you'll just have to use this brush.

Source file available

Learn this technique
using the supplied files

What does it mean?

LENS FLARE – Occurs when light is reflected within a lens, producing those recognisable rings across a picture's surface. Though they're natural accidents and can turn an image hazy, many people use them to add drama; not least *Star Trek* director J J Abrams, who used 721 in the 2009 sci-fi film.

Start
image

Create a custom lens flare effect

Add colour and creativity with nothing but a ray of light

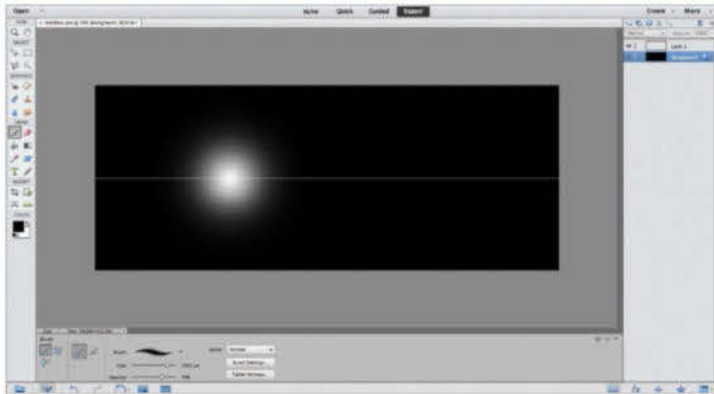
Most Photoshop and Elements users have a mixed relationship with the lens-flare effect. On the one hand, it's a fantastically simple and potentially restrained photo fix, but on the other, there are only four preset flares to choose from. How can you be consistently original with only a handful of options?

The obvious answer to this particular dilemma is to do a search, and source them from elsewhere. There are countless lens flares available on the internet, which are perfect for a swift solution, but

creating your own is a great creative project that can be so much more rewarding. Simply study other lens flares, build up an idea of what you want in yours, and by relying on opacity and blend modes, and combining these with colour, you too will be able to create a fresh, new lens flare that can be used in any photo.

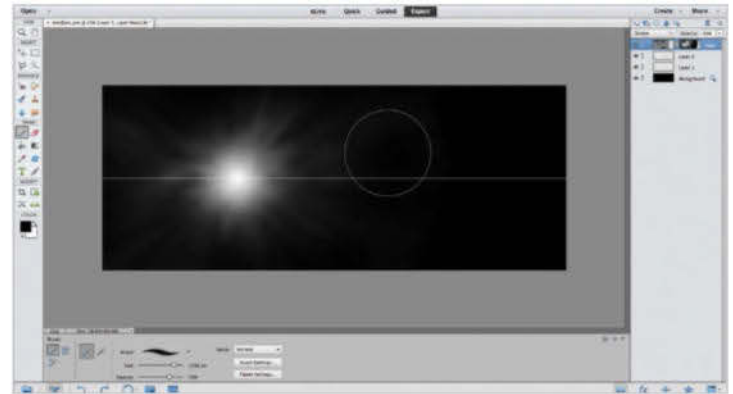
The great news is that you need little more than a brush and creativity. After all, the more limited a feature, the more creative you can be as an artist.

Artistic flare Use brushes and blending to bring light to life



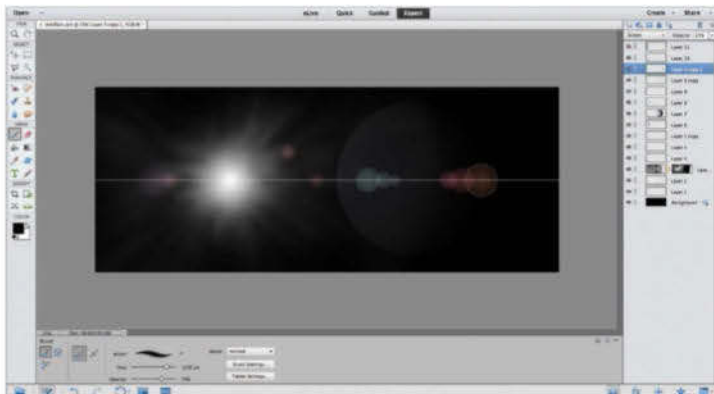
Make a mark

01 Start a new project, twice as wide as it is high, and fill the Background layer in black. Draw a horizontal line through the centre. This is the guide. Create a new layer and with a soft, white brush, about a third of the way in from the left, make a mark.



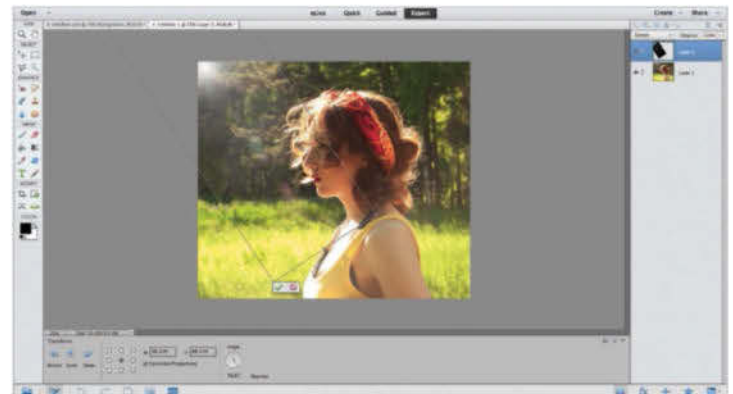
Add shine

02 To create shine, go to Filter>Render>Clouds, then Blur>Radial Blur and set the Amount to 100. This will create a vortex-like effect. Change the blend mode to Screen, and place so the centre is over the light. Add a mask and soften the edges with a black brush.



Scatter spheres

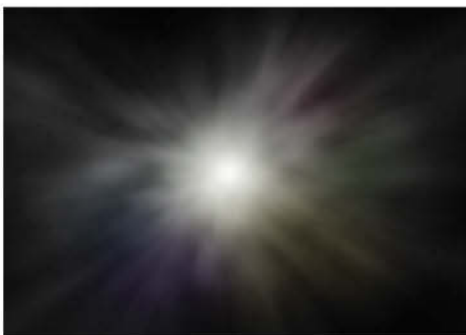
03 Use the Elliptical Marquee and a soft brush to add in extra bits of light. Change the blend modes of these layers to Screen, and alter Opacities. Experiment with size, colour and overlap until you build up a longer lens flare from the circles.



Place onto photo

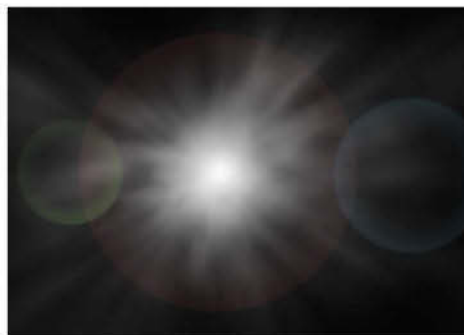
04 Merge the whole thing together when you're finished, minus the layer with the guide line, and copy, before pasting the lens flare onto your picture. Change the blend mode to Screen, resize as necessary and rotate to give the beam of light a direction.

Other flare options Experiment for even more inventive effects



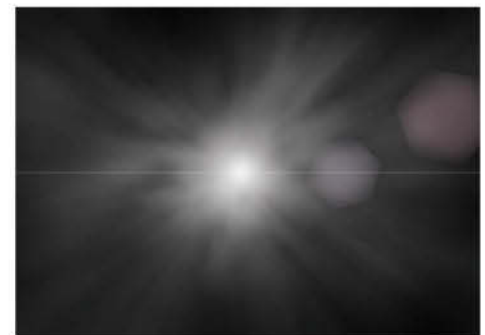
Coloured light

Most lens flares use white light, but why not incorporate colour into yours for a somewhat surreal tone? Simply add a layer over the layer of light, and colour in over the flare, before setting the blend mode to Soft Light. This is great when used with artificial lights, such as disco balls.



Hollow spheres

Another popular effect is to brush in the colour of your sphere, before grabbing the Eraser and hollowing out the circle. This creates a nice light arc, which can be seen on the Photoshop preset lens flares; or why not create a soft semi-circle either side of the main flare for added effect?



Hexagons

We have used circles predominantly for this tutorial and dotted them across the main line, but hexagons are another option. Simply draw them or paste them and soften the sides. It gives a nice bokeh effect, and can be used both instead of, and in combination with, the circles.

Master the Harris Shutter effect

Create this classic colour-channel-splitting effect in Elements

So many Photoshop and Elements effects rely on colour and movement, but few are as simple to create as the Harris Shutter effect.

Originally invented by photographer Bob Harris, the effect involved taking three pictures at different times and exposing various colours for each. When blended as one photo, it was possible to see each colour, for each to overlap, and for each picture to be visible within the one. Any three pictures can be comped together to create this cool effect, but it's best to use similar pictures, preferably from the same angle. Similar or identical colours cancel themselves out, and the bright colours are left to shine.

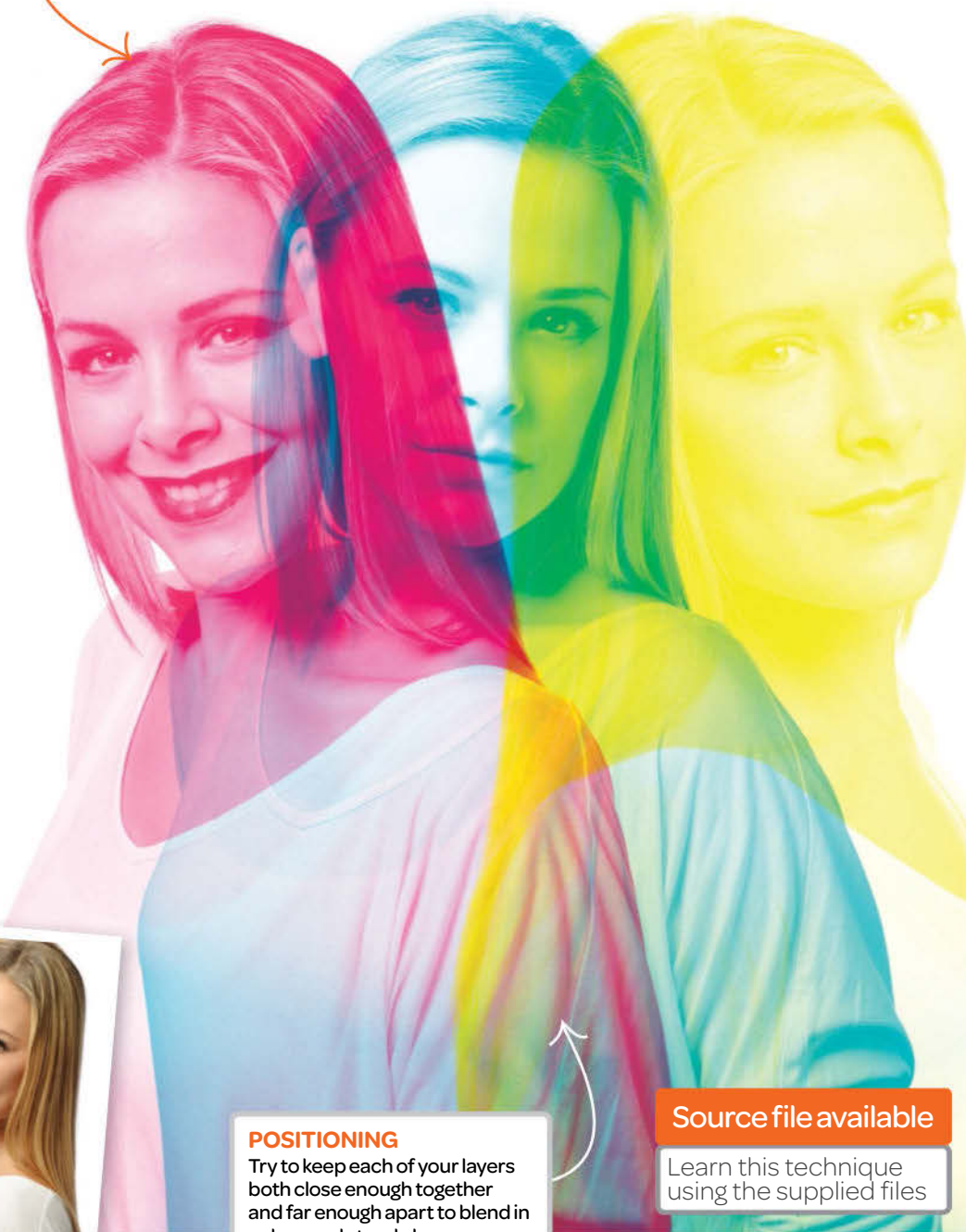
You can create this in Photoshop by altering the colour channels within your pictures, but you can create the same effect by using blend modes and merging layers in Elements. In fact, Elements also gives you more control of the colouration and saturation of your layers. Let's check out how to inject vibrant animation into your pictures.

PINK/RED

Set your two overlap layers to Color Burn (50% Opacity) and Screen to create a vibrant, well-saturated pink layer.

What does it mean?

MULTIPLY, SCREEN & SOFT LIGHT
– Each blend mode has a different functionality. Multiply is great for mixing colours, and ignores white in the picture, whereas Screen attaches coloured pixels to dark layers. Soft Light is great for subtly blending coloured pixels as a finishing touch.



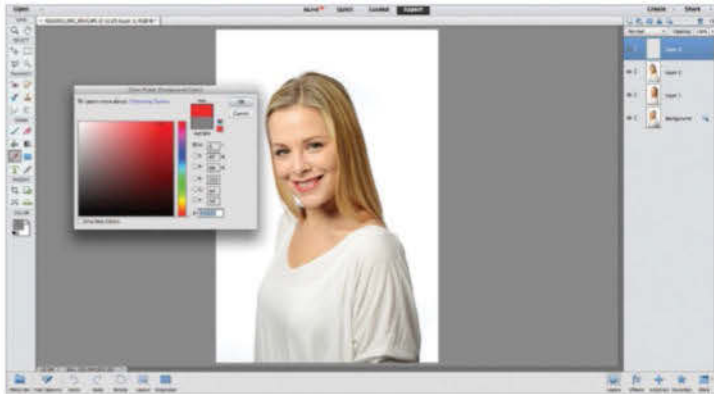
POSITIONING

Try to keep each of your layers both close enough together and far enough apart to blend in colour and stand alone.

Source file available

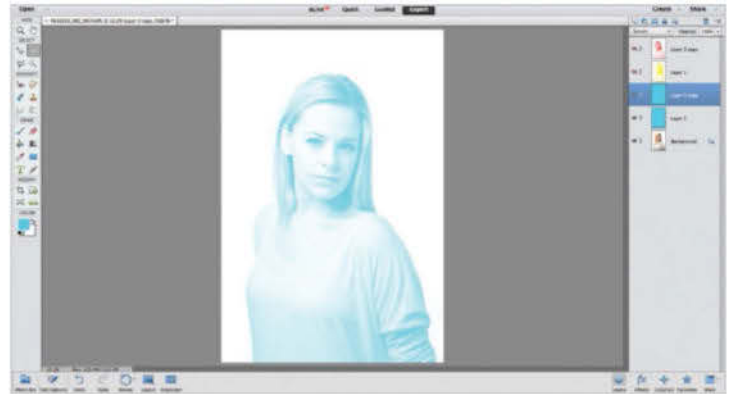
Learn this technique using the supplied files

Split the colours Get creative using primary hues and layers



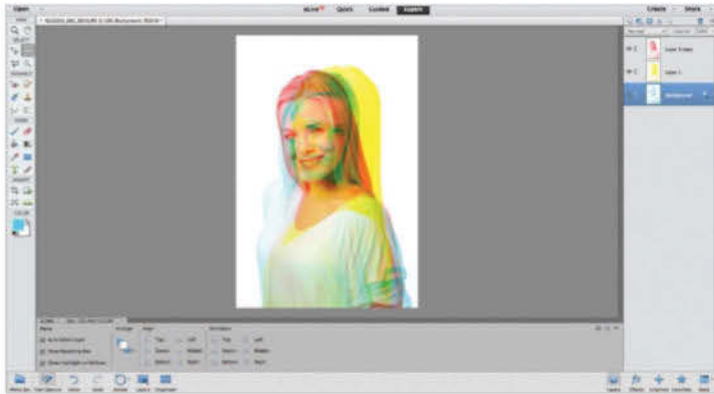
Add red

01 Find three pictures of a subject in slightly different poses. Put into one document, each with a different layer, and create a red (#FC2222) layer above your top layer. Set the blend mode to Multiply: this will blend the coloured pixels of the subject with your colour.



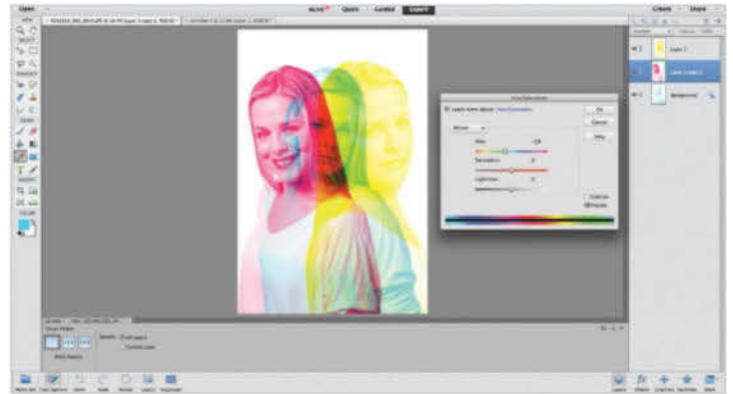
Complete other layers

02 Merge your red layer to the subject and hide. Repeat with the other layers, choosing cyan (#FCFF00) and yellow (#00DFF9). You may want to experiment with blend modes: Color Burn, Color and Screen all give slightly different finishes to the coloured portrait.



Multiply and arrange

03 Merge your coloured layers to the respective subject layers and turn all the blend modes to Multiply. This will let each picture shine through one another. Rearrange layers if needed to show equal amounts of red, blue, yellow and mixed colour.



Apply finishing touches

04 Finally, you can edit any of the colours if need be by going to Ctrl/Cmd+U; we decided to turn the red to a pinker hue by moving the slider to -20, but you can always turn your three channels to any colour you like.

Other effects Where else can I use the Harris Shutter effect?



Motion shots

The Harris Shutter effect is great for multiple pictures of a moving vehicle, taken from the same angle. If you don't have enough of these, though, copy your vehicle to new layers, apply colourful Screen layers and use varying degrees of Motion Blur.



Liquid images

Photos of waterfalls make particularly good subjects for this effect, because like vehicle images, a waterfall has plenty of motion. Liquid in general, though, is great for applying the effect to, as you can use different colours for all the droplets and splashes.



3D effects

Why not use just two colours to create a 3D effect? Pick one picture, duplicate it twice and turn one layer cyan and one red, with Screened layers. Then, set both layers to Soft Light and shift them each 20 pixels in the opposite direction from each other.

WHICH COLOUR IS RIGHT?

A good rule is dark for shadows and light colours for highlights, but find the inverted colour of one to see the complementary colour for the other.

COLOUR-FILLED LAYERS

If you want to fill a layer quickly, press Alt/Opt+backspace to colour it with the Foreground colour in your swatch.

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied file

Create a split tone effect



Use blend modes to give a classic finish to any photo in Elements

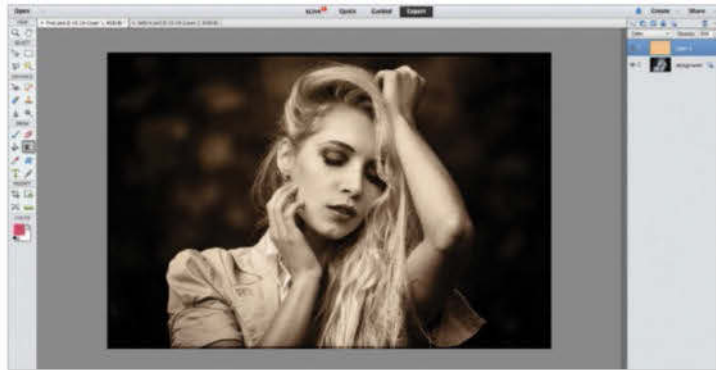
Few photo effects can be both as creative and as subtle as a split-toned picture, but it is possible to throw a whole new spin on a photo just by adding two or three colours.

Split toning was first popularised back before colour pictures had even been invented. Photographers discovered that adding a deeper, richer colour to the shaded parts of an image, while introducing a colourful tint to the highlights would help to flesh out originally dull monochrome snaps. Despite people working digitally, it's a technique that has lived on through Photoshop.

Monochrome editing is just the start, though. By working on these techniques and getting the hang of editing photos with layers, you can bring bright, exciting filters to just about any photo you choose; in Photoshop you may use the Channel Mixer, but we're using layers and blend modes in Elements.

Let's discover exactly how to master split toning, and remember, our colours and styles are just a guide; experiment with your own shades, opacities and blend modes, and who knows what you'll come up with?

Splitting the colours Add colourful highlights and shadows to any picture



The highlights layer

01 Open your picture. You don't have to use a monochrome photo, but for this particular picture, we're going to go with black and white. To desaturate, press Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+U. Create a new layer, and fill in with a sepia kind of colour. The exact shade we went for is #f3c08c. Set Opacity to 50% and blend mode to Color.



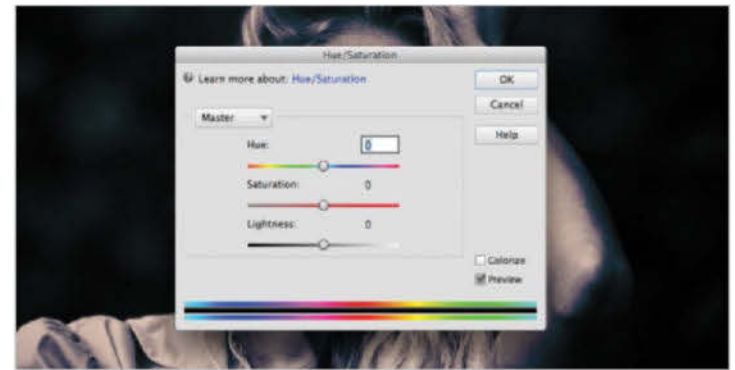
The shadows layer

02 The first layer that you've created is going to change the colour of the highlights, and give them a depth and hue. Now, we're going to alter the shadows by selecting a dark blue colour – we've chosen #003364 – creating a new layer, filling it with the blue and setting the blend mode to Overlay, and the Opacity to 80%.



The midtones layer

03 If it looks good like that, that's the picture finished! We're just going to add one more layer, though. Change the Opacity to 10% and set the blend mode to Soft Light; by filling this layer in a reddish pink (#cc4c6a), this will give the midtones just a touch of colour. Use your midtone layer as a subtle filter.



Colour tweaking

04 This might only be the start for you in your search for the perfect split-tone picture. The great thing about editing the picture with three separate layers, is that you can edit them all separately and tweak the layers until you're content with the effect. Just press Cmd/Ctrl+U and use the sliders!

Other colour options What other effects can a split-toning give?



Colour pictures

If you use a slight split tone on colour photos, you can bring out shades in your picture. Here, we've used purple (#4b243e) on the shadows and beige (#e1a99e) on the highlights to bring out the chocolate-brown of the dog.



Seasonal moods

We associate different colours with different moods, so it's easy to create a seasonal shot with the right split tone. Here, we've used blues – #8cd5f3 for the highlights and #003655 for the shadows – to create a wintery scene.



Lomo-like shots

To give your picture a Lomo feel, use the setup from the main tutorial, only with purple shadows (#300044). When using colour photos, you may have to change the shadow layer's blend mode to Lighten. Experiment with what works!

What does it mean?

SOLARIZE – Solarisation is a darkroom technique. It plays with the exposure of the positive and negative parts of a picture, to create something high in contrast. While solarising your pictures looks great with bright colours, it's also a fun technique that can add punch to black-and-white shots.

COLOUR

Bright psychedelic colours look best when you use pictures of skies; experiment with which pictures work with the effect, though.

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

Start image

Master tone and colour reversal

Create psychedelic pictures by flipping colour and tone in Elements

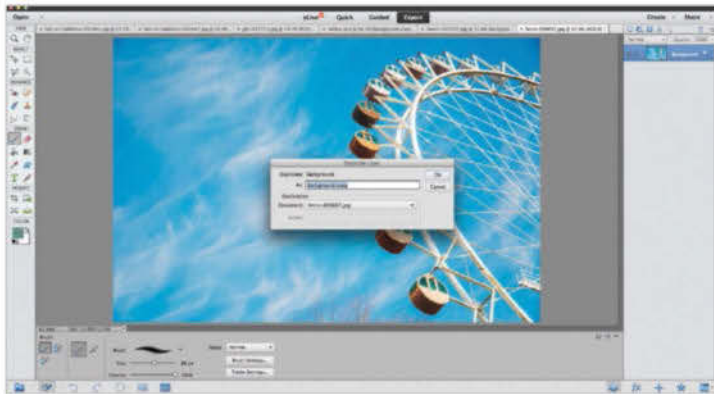
Often, it's easy to tell when a picture looks over-saturated: you can see noise in the corners and the bright colours don't look natural. It's something that artists try to avoid in Photoshop and Elements, but just for once, why not embrace it and try to create the brightest pictures possible?

Tone and colour reversal is a simple effect that can be achieved using a few techniques. It evokes the psychedelic look that was so popular in the 1960s, and when done with taste and style, it can turn

any old boring photo into an intriguing, colourful masterpiece. By employing some masking, you can just use it to transform a sky or an object, and by editing the hue and saturation as a final touch, you can bring an array of colours into your pictures.

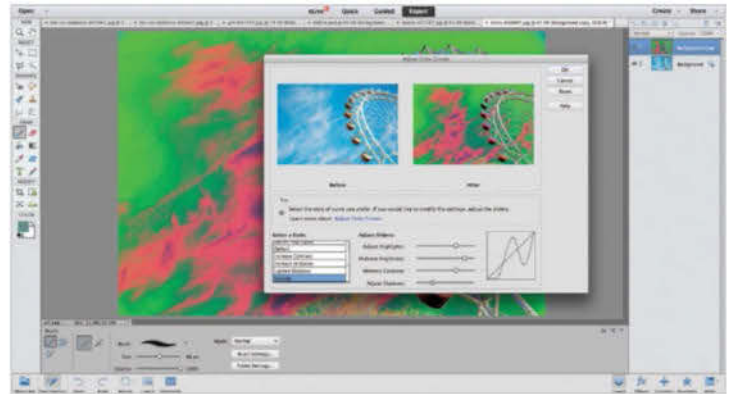
It's one of the most fun tutorials you can do when you start editing pictures: it rewards the creativity in you, and doesn't rely quite so much on being tidy and perfect. Check out our top tips for injecting colour into your photos.

Reverse the polarity Invert your colours and embrace saturation



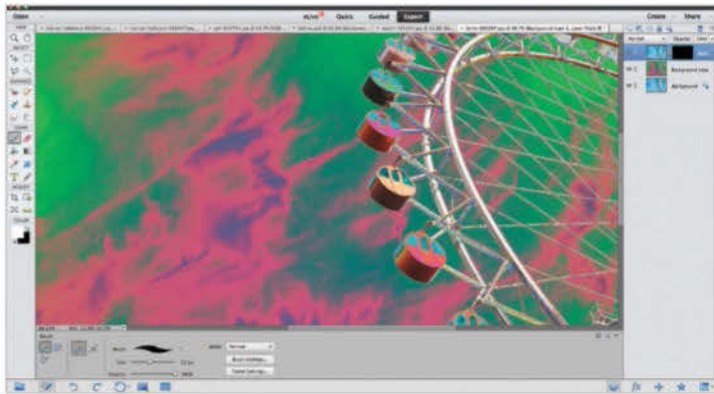
Duplicate the layer

01 Open your picture and duplicate the layer. We're going for heavy edits, so having a copy is useful in case you want to revert to your original image, or layer your original image over the final image, with an Opacity of 20%, just to lessen the saturation.



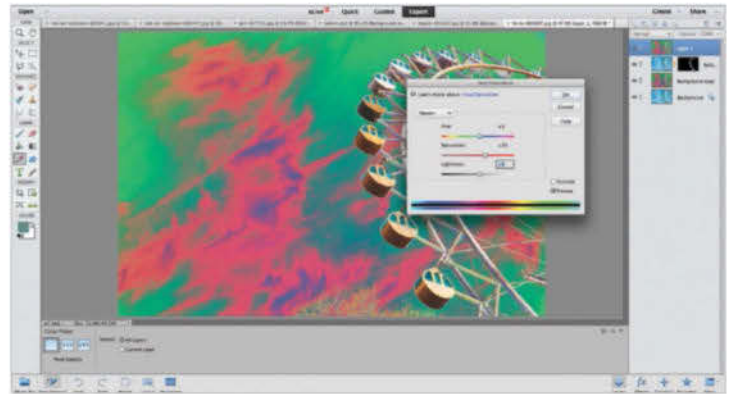
Adjust Color Curves

02 Head to Enhance>Adjust Color>Adjust Color Curves. In the Select a Style drop-down menu, choose Solarize. This will give the psychedelic effect: all you have to do now is adjust highlights, brightness, contrast and shadows with the sliders.



Mask

03 Duplicate the original layer and move to the top of the stack. Hit the mask icon, and press Cmd/Ctrl+I to invert the mask. With a soft brush, mask anything you want to remain unaffected by the edit. This could be a subject, or just some colours you want to retain.



Tweak Hue/Saturation

04 Time for some finishing flourishes. Merge your layers into one layer on top of the stack (Cmd/Ctrl+Alt/Opt+Shift+E) and hit Cmd/Ctrl+U to bring up the Hue/Saturation panel. Increase Saturation by 20 and change Hue by 5 either side to make colours pop.

Other methods More spectrum-busting techniques to create colourful effects



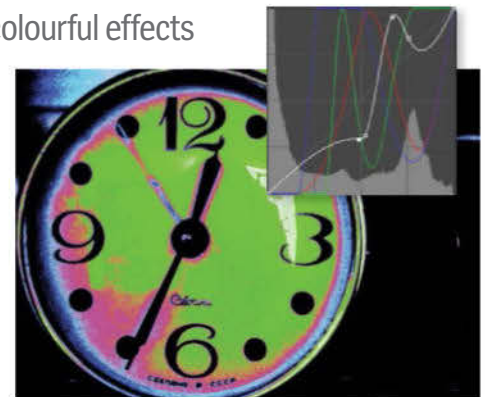
Exclusion

Blend modes and gradients can create wildly colourful effects, but by creating a new layer for your gradient and setting your blend mode to Exclusion, you can create a psychedelic effect, and have more control over the positioning of colours in your picture.



Gradient maps

Gradient maps are usually for creating sepia effects, but by bringing bright, garish shades into your gradient – select Spectrum from Filter>Adjustments>Gradient Map – you can give a much more colourful finish to your picture. Tweak the positioning of colours with the stops.



Curves in Photoshop

If you're using Photoshop, try adding a Curves adjustment and tweaking the individual RGB strands in extreme directions. This will create a picture with fewer but brighter colours; experiment to see which combinations look best with the image.

Add a reflection to sunglasses

Use Elements to add a landscape to a subject's glasses

If you're trying to work out if an image you've found has been manipulated in Photoshop, one of the key areas to check for is in the shadows, lighting and reflections. Often, if an artist has forgotten these surrounding areas, a picture doesn't quite look convincing, so it's important to add these little details whenever you're crafting a composition.

Reflections are not just a vital part of a photo's realism though; they're also a creative extra that can enhance a picture, a bit like giving a subject a backdrop. Adding a reflection can transform a photo, as it can add colour, brightness and excitement, as well as give a sense of place.

By using simple composition techniques, it's easy to distort a photo, blend it in with the rest of the picture and use it as a reflection. Check out how to add a reflection to a surface in just four steps, and experiment with different amounts of distortion and opacity to adapt your reflection to your subject.

Source file available

Learn this technique
using the supplied files

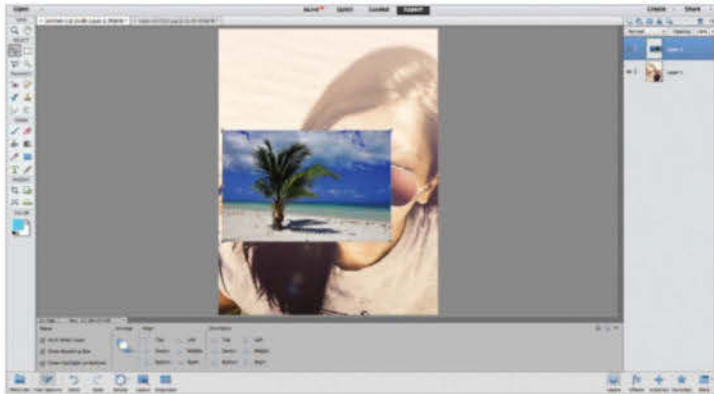


What does it mean?

SPHERIZE – The Spherize option in the distort menu bulges an image into a sphere – great for creating round objects that need depth and shape, but also to draw images in the opposite direction by sliding the Amount to negative figures. In Photoshop, the Pucker and Bloat tool can do these in Liquify.

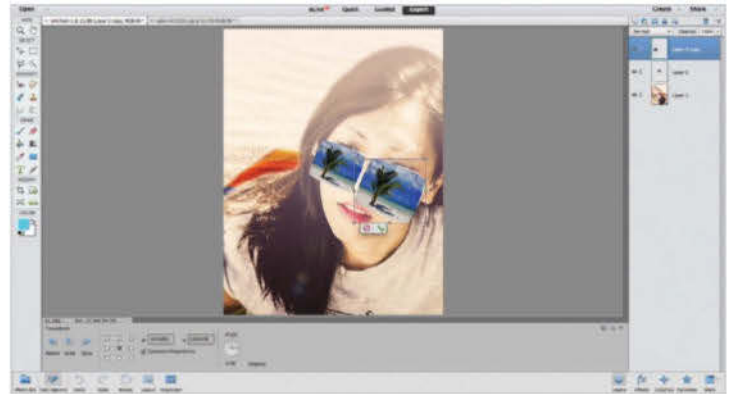
Reflect your landscape

Use sunglasses to mirror your composition's surroundings



Find your reflection

01 First, find a reflection that you want to add to the sunglasses. Choose one that fits the aesthetic of the image, as it will have to be a view the subject is likely to see. Paste the image into the picture, and move it to the centre; this means that it will distort cleanly.



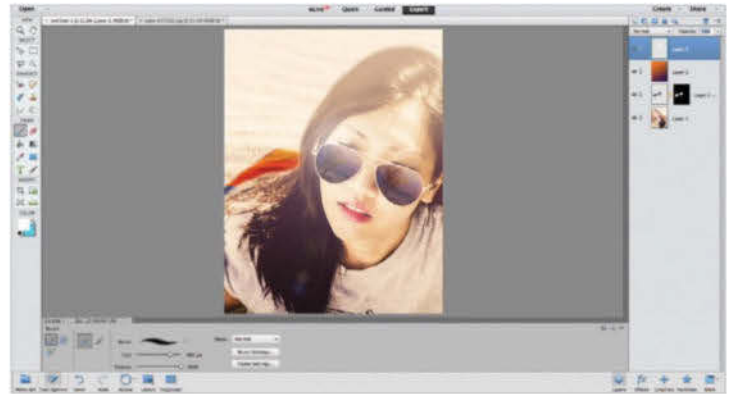
Distort and duplicate

02 Go to Filter>Distort>Spherize: 100%. This is usually enough to curve an image for glasses, but if the glasses are thick, press Cmd/Ctrl+F to repeat. Duplicate the layer and resize both images. Ctrl/right-click, Transform, rotate reflections and place over the glasses.



Blend

03 Ctrl/right-click the reflection layers and merge: set to Soft Light. Add a mask and invert it by pressing Cmd/Ctrl+I. With a soft, white brush, mask in the reflections. Turn the Opacity down to 50% so you can see where you're masking.



Add filters

04 To unify the reflections and the original subject, add a gradient on a new layer, Orange to Violet, from top to bottom. Add another new layer and with a big soft white brush, add a 50% opaque, white dot on a lens to suggest shine.

Other surfaces

How do you create reflections for these items?



Bevelled surfaces

When reflecting an image on a surface curved inwards – such as the inside a spoon – the reflection has to be distorted in the opposite way: instead of spherizing to 100%, move the slider the other way to -100%. Rotate the reflection to set it upside down, too.



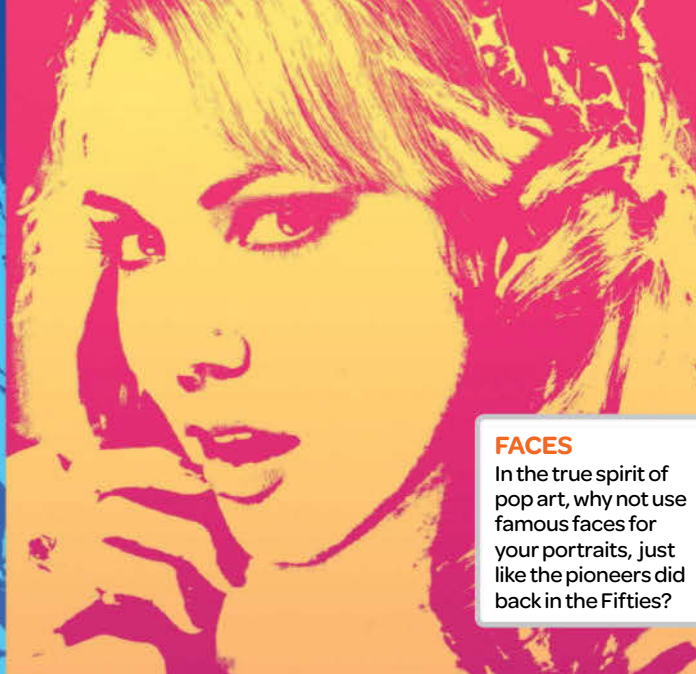
Low-light reflections

If you want to create a reflection in a low-lit environment, you might want to keep the opacity high. Different reflections need different opacities, but usually if there's less light around, such as in space, you can see more in the reflections of shiny objects.



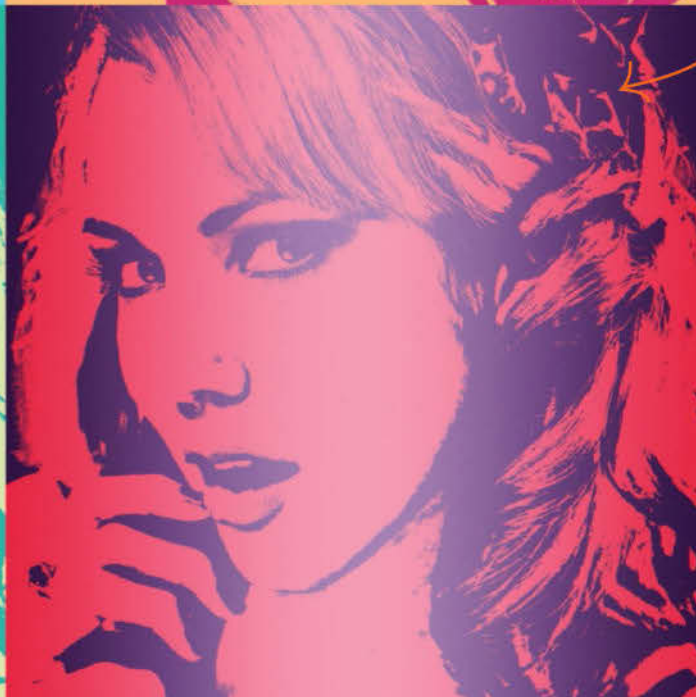
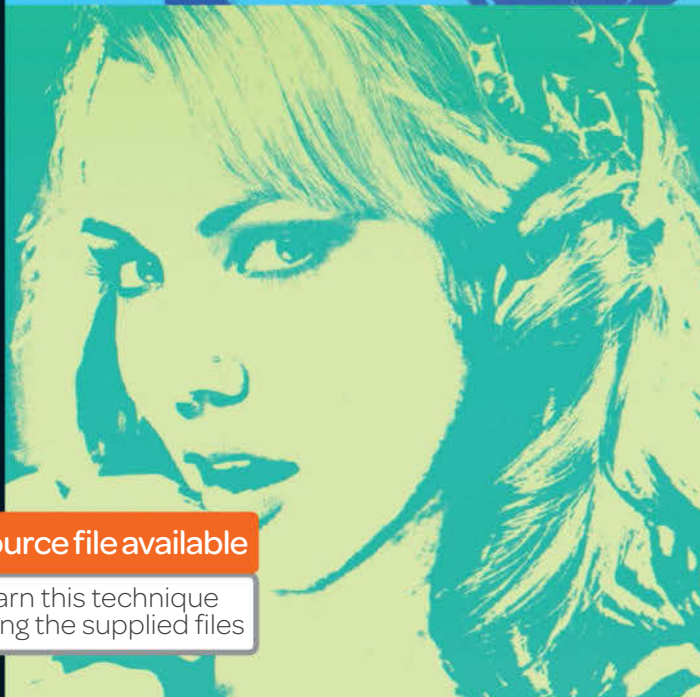
Flat surfaces

When reflecting flat surfaces, there's less need, sometimes no need, to distort. Simply add your reflection layer as you would usually, and set to Soft Light; your opacity will depend on the brightness of the room you're reflecting against the surface.



FACES

In the true spirit of pop art, why not use famous faces for your portraits, just like the pioneers did back in the Fifties?



Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

Create vibrant pop art

Evoked the spirit of Fifties artwork with cool colour effects in your photos

Pop art started in the early Fifties in Britain, before moving across to America a few years later. The idea was to create minimal, subversive pictures that rebelled against the fine art of the past with pop-culture icons – hence the name – and bold, block colours.

It's a movement that's stood the test of time; the pop art image of Marilyn Monroe is still influential today. The effect has survived,

though, because it's an exciting and effervescent way to display a portrait.

It's easy to create in Photoshop Elements, too. Elements offers a simple guided edit, and it can be used either as a means to create a final picture, or a springboard to experiment with colours and shades. The key is to have fun: it's a striking effect and one you can be as creative as you like with.



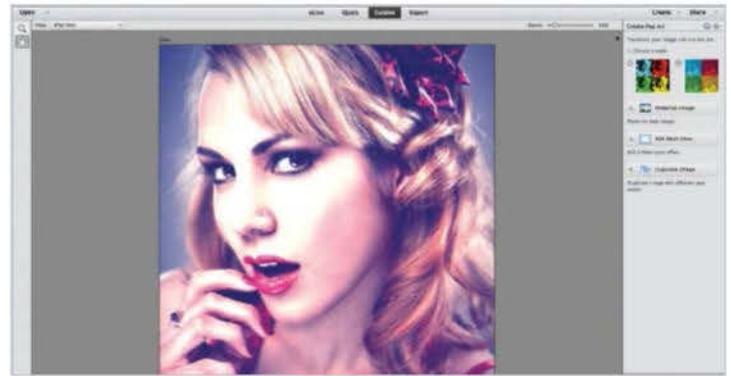
Start image

Make images pop Bring bright shades and block colours into portraits



Prime your picture

01 Start off by grabbing the Crop tool, and selecting a ratio of 1:1. Crop your image so that it's now square, and touch up the lighting in the piece, to make sure you have good contrast in your picture. Do this either by hitting Cmd/Ctrl+L or going to the Quick tab and editing the exposure.



Choose a style

02 Move to the Guided tab at the top of your screen and choose Photo Play>Pop Art. Here you'll have either a Threshold or Posterize option for your picture. The Threshold on the left will reduce your picture to two colours, Posterize (on the right) to a few more. Select the Threshold option.



Convert and colour

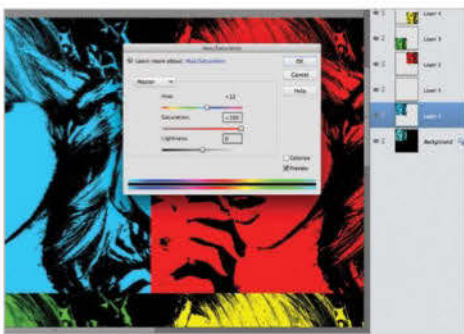
03 Hit Convert Image Mode, and your picture will become black and white. A shade of blue will fill up all the white space in the image: press Add Colour to add it to your picture, and you'll have your first pop art square. You can either keep the image like this, or duplicate for a grid of portraits.



Experiment with styles

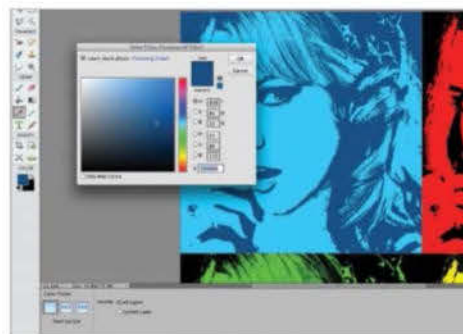
04 Hit Duplicate Image to take your pop art square and duplicate it three times across the picture, in green, red and yellow. This is the classic pop-art look as we know it, but feel free to experiment; go back and try the Posterize option, or follow the steps below to customise the finished picture that you've just created.

Customise the colours Use clipping masks to adjust the hues of your masterpiece



Adjust hues

01 Click on a layer that you want to adjust the colour of. Hit Cmd/Ctrl+U and you'll be able to adjust the Hue and Saturation of your individual square. Move the sliders to change how the colour appears.



Add darker colour

02 Create a new layer, set to Lighten and then Ctrl/right-click and click Create Clipping Mask. Fill in your layer with a dark colour and it will replace the black in your image for more vibrant effect.



Tweak with gradients

03 Create a new layer above these darker colour layers and again, set as a clipping mask. Click the Gradient tool and have fun mixing shades and blend modes to create exciting colour effects over your picture.

Create a basket weave

Brighten up ordinary photos in Elements with a complex-looking novelty effect

With so many wildly exciting features, it really is easy to be creative in Photoshop Elements. However, the real challenge comes from creating something original with basic tools.

Creating this basket weave might seem like a straightforward copy-and-paste exercise after you've found a cool texture, but it's possible to build a weave from scratch just using fills and gradients, with a little guidance from a grid. Building a texture yourself means that you can have complete control over the dimensions – you can even add colour if you want – so we're going to build it in a separate project before importing it into the picture we want to use it on.

Let's take a closer look at how to create the complicated-looking basket weave effect, and break it down simply into selecting and adding colour. And remember, once you've created the basket weave, you can save the picture and use the texture as many times as you like!

WEAVE WISELY

Make sure the outlines of your basket weave don't obstruct the main facial features of your subject, like eyes or teeth.

What does it mean?

GRIDS – When you're working to specific dimensions and ratios, grids keep you organised. Go to File>Snap>Grids, and every object you move will automatically snap to these lines. Without grids and snapping, it's difficult to line up objects perfectly and also to create multiple objects of the same size.

VIGNETTE

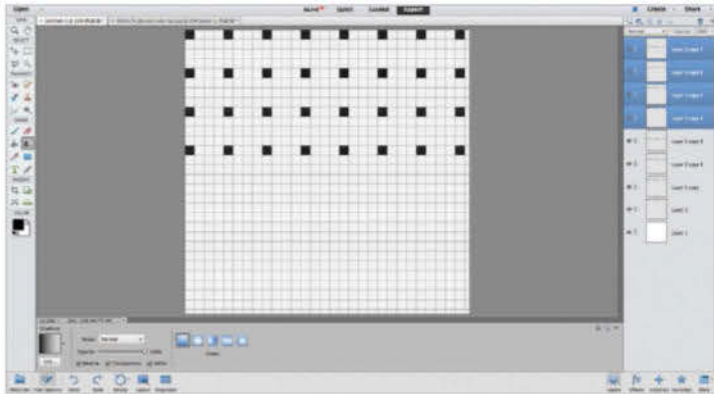
Adding a vignette can help give a basket weave a bit of tone, suggesting this is a real texture, and not just pasted on.



Source file available

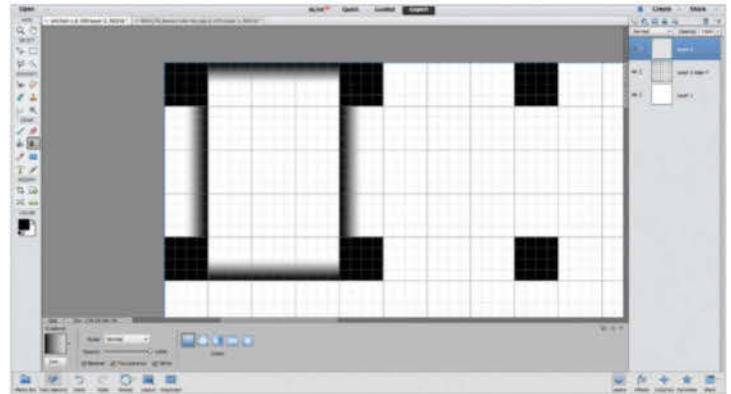
Learn this technique using the supplied files

Weave some magic Understand the basics to create this texture



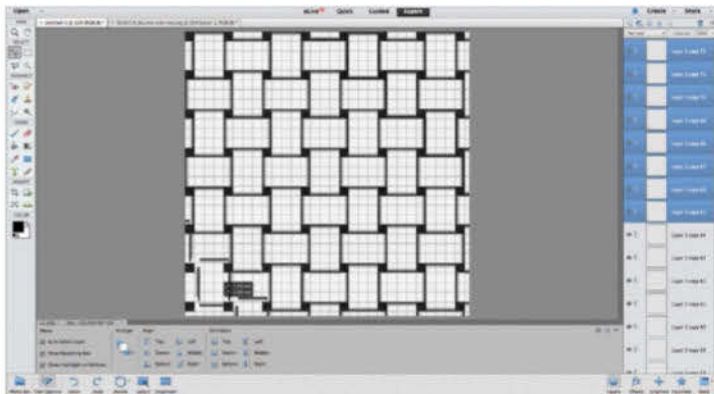
Create the gaps

01 Go to View>Grid to add a grid to your work. From here you can get a sense of distance and make objects snap perfectly in line with each other. Select a small square and fill in black. Duplicate the layer and move four squares away. Repeat until the page is full.



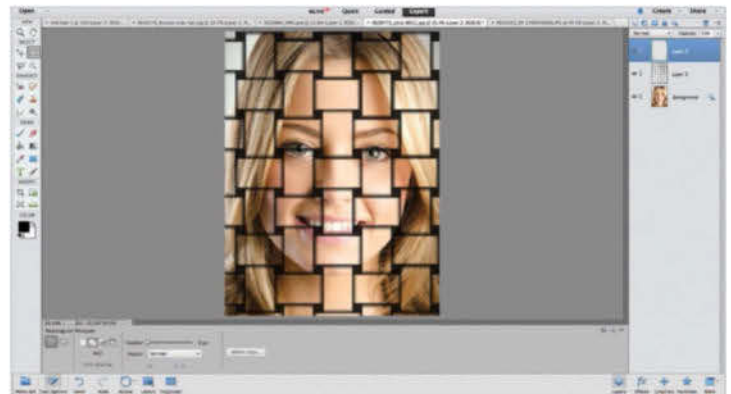
Add gradients

02 Create a new layer and zoom in to four squares. Make a selection between the top two and pick the Gradient tool; add a black and transparent gradient with black fading up. Select the other spaces between the black squares and add gradients as shown above.



Duplicate

03 With this pattern surrounding four of the squares, duplicate and move it diagonally below the original four squares. Ctrl/right-click the layer to duplicate again and again, filling the page with this pattern, until it resembles a basket-weave effect.



Add it to the picture

04 Merge all layers by Ctrl/right-clicking one layer and pressing Merge Visible. Ctrl/right-click and Duplicate Layer, choosing the destination as the picture to apply the effect to. Add a vignette by selecting a big, soft, black brush and painting around the edges.

More options How much further can you take the basket-weave effect?



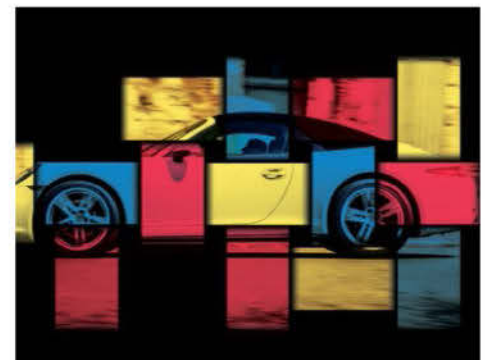
Liquify

Once you've created your basket-weave texture, there are countless things you can do, including using the Liquify tool in Photoshop. Either shrink or expand over the overlapping threads to give your weave a bit of depth and added realism.



Light and shade

To add tone into your basket weave, select alternate squares of your image, Ctrl/right-click and Copy Via Layer. Go to Cmd/Ctrl+L to adjust Levels. By making the horizontal threads lighter than the vertical ones, you bring some forward.



Get creative

Once you've learned how to edit individual squares from a weave, there's no limit to what you can do. Here, we've simply created new layers and filled colours into the picture, setting the layer to Multiply, before blacking out the rest.

What does it mean?

DISPLACE – To Displace a layer, save your picture as a PSD, head to Filter>Distort>Displace. On the Horizontal and Vertical scale values, select 50 for each, and click OK. Choose a PSD file: this is the map on which you distort your layer. Click OK, and the layer should melt over the picture.

BLUSHER

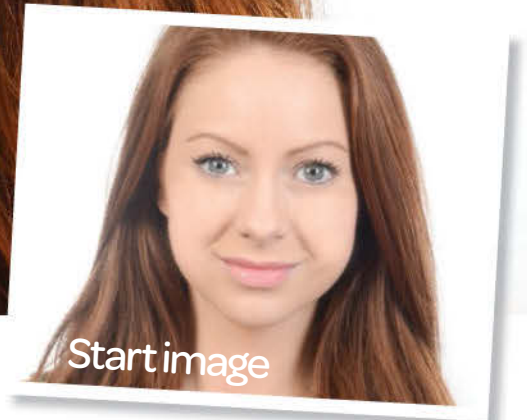
Add a light pink layer of 10% Opacity and a medium pink of 20% above that, to create rosier cheeks.

LIPS

To add a new shade of lipstick, brush over the lips in colour, and turn the Opacity down to 20%.

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files



Apply colourful make up

Use Elements to add a dash of colour to your subjects

Adding make up is a tricky aspect to master when editing in Photoshop and Elements. Get it right, and you enhance the natural beauty of your subject, with simple and creative brushing techniques. Get it wrong, and it can look clown-like and unnatural. There's a fine line between the two, and sometimes just 10% Opacity.

Applying make up can be fun and artistic, though. Any colour is workable, and you can give a subject a completely different feel by trying out different shades. It's also something that you can do no

matter what the picture style is; if you're creating a fantasy composition, you might want to choose ethereal hues for the make up, and if you're creating a science-fiction character, you might want to play with electric, neon-like colours.

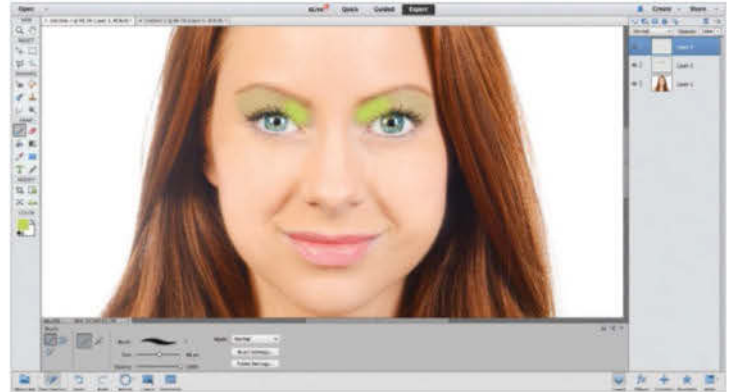
Once you've mastered the basics of make up, you can then move on to even more advanced edits. Let's take a look at how to add make up on your pictures; you could save yourself a lot of time getting ready with this tutorial.

Apply coloured eye shadow Put the 'art' into 'make up artist'



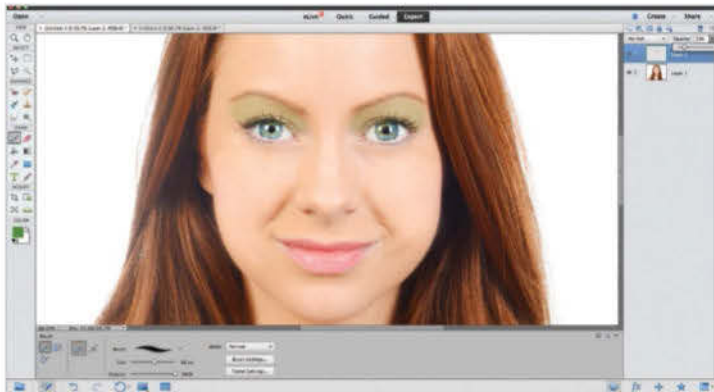
Brush some colour

01 Start off by picking a shade that you want to use on your subject. We've gone for a deep green to complement the hair colour, but you can choose any colour at all. Create a new layer, and with a soft brush, paint the colour between the eye and the eyebrow.



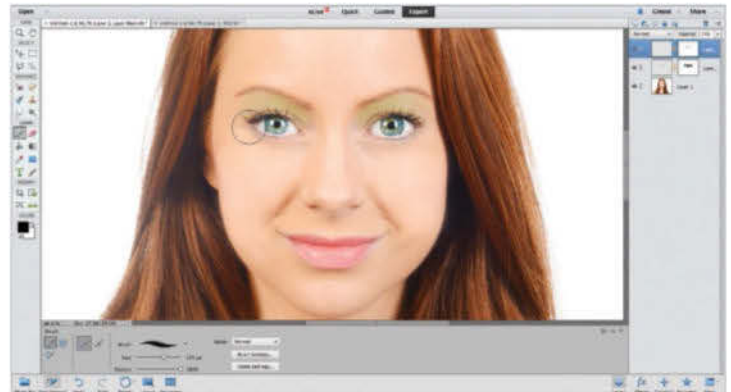
Apply Gaussian Blur

02 Lower the opacity of the coloured layer you've just painted, so that you can see how it looks in relation to the face – any value will do right now; we'll correct the opacity next. On another new layer, paint a second shade, perhaps a slightly different hue to the last one.



Set opacity

03 It's vital to keep the make up subtle. Tone down your first shade to 10% Opacity and your second to 20%. Anything more than this, and it will look obvious that the make up isn't real. You might even want to add a third layer with another hue at low opacity.



Mask to perfection

04 Subtlety is the key with applying make up, so with all this eye-shadow colour applied, the last thing is to tidy it up. Mask the layers and with a big, black, soft brush, erase the sides so the colour looks like it flows naturally.

Other colourful effects Where else can you apply this technique?



Nails

To create painted nails, we're going to have to create two colour layers. With the first, brush the colour and reduce the Opacity to 60%; duplicate this layer, and then set the blend mode to Overlay. Mask over both layers, and use the Dodge tool to apply a shine.



Face paint

Adding face paint uses the same technique, only go to Filter>Distort>Displace to mould a picture to the contours of a face. Duplicate your layer again, setting the first to Color, 20% Opacity, and the second to Soft Light, 100% Opacity. Lightly mask with a soft brush around the edges.



Lipstick

Use the same Displace technique to apply a pattern to some lips, and again, use two layers. Set the first one to Color, 60% Opacity, and the second one to Soft Light, 60% Opacity to show both the lightness in the shades, and the hue of the pattern.

What does it mean?

POINTILLISM – An artistic style that relies on small dots to create a big picture. It was developed in the late 1800s and branched away from Impressionism. The filter in Photoshop and Elements takes dominant colours from a picture to create a similar style. The smaller the dots, the more detail.

USE MASKS

Mask away grain on your subject's face with a soft, black brush of 20% Opacity, to ensure facial features aren't obstructed.

SEPIA

A sepia tone adds a vintage feel, but you can add any colour overlay to finish: light blue and grey look great.

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

Mimic film grain

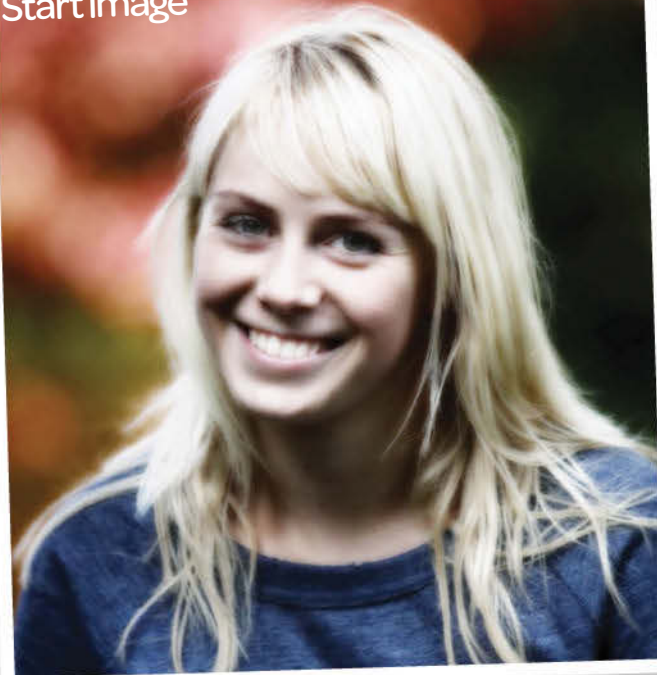
Give a classic finish to your photos and add a touch of noise

Restoring old photos and making them look brand new is actually quite straightforward when you learn how to use the Clone Stamp and the Brush tools. Often though, taking a recent photo and sending it back in time with vintage effects can be much more difficult to pull off.

Film grain can actually be a great addition to your pictures, whether or not you're searching for a vintage photo look. It adds a distinguished filter to your work and it looks especially good when combined with a sepia layer. If you're going to add a scratched or worn overlay to your pictures, to make them look like they're taken on old film, a layer of film grain can be perfect.

There are so many options when it comes to creating retro photos, but film grain is perhaps the first layer that should be added to any classic snap. It's a technique that you can use in any picture: check out our guide of how to create this weathered look.

Start image



Sprinkle some grain

Add the film grain and adjust its detail



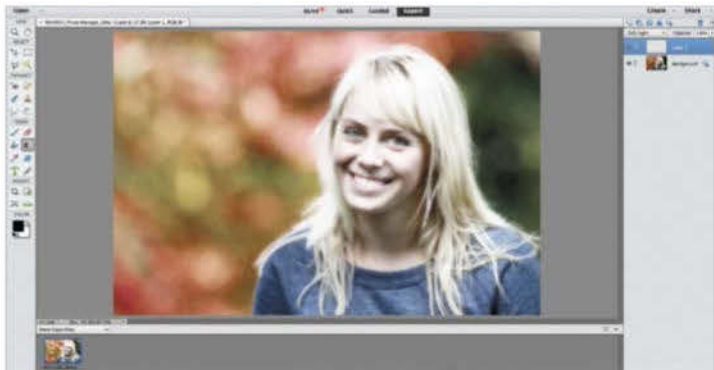
Create a white layer

01 Start off by opening the picture you want to add the film grain to; black-and-white photos work well with this technique, but you can use any kind of picture at all. Create a new layer and fill in with white (pressing Alt/Opt+backspace fills in your layer with the Foreground colour, Cmd/Ctrl+backspace with the Background colour).



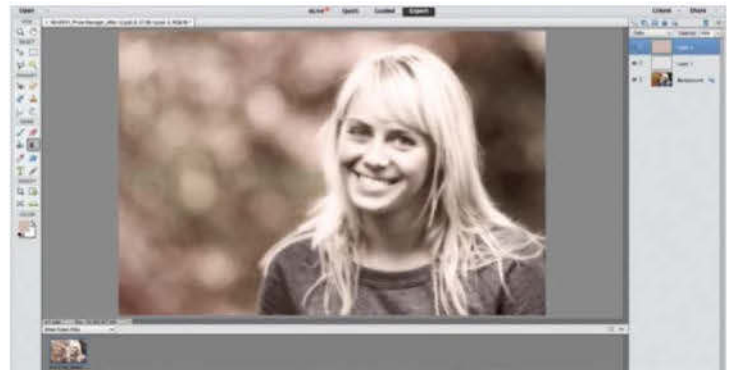
Add noise

02 Go to Filter>Noise>Add Noise. Set the Amount to around 50%; this will be enough to add a light noise to your picture without being too much. Set the Distribution to Uniform. It doesn't matter whether you check the Monochromatic box, though, as so far you're only working with black and white.



Change blend mode

03 Change the blend mode of your layer to Soft Light for the best results; this will give an overall noise to both the light and dark pixels of the layer below. Overlay also works nicely, and both Multiply and Pin Light produce darker grains. Experiment with what looks best; try multiple blend modes if need be.

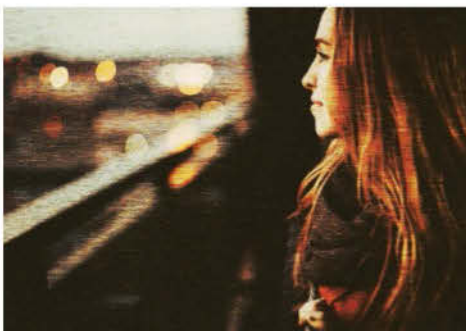


Fill colour layers

04 Finish up with a final, optional adjustment and add a colourful layer to turn your picture either monochrome or sepia. Simply create a new layer and fill with a colour; we've gone with #cfb8ae to tinge the picture with beige. Switch the blend mode to Color and reduce the Opacity down to 80% to finalise this.

Other great grainy effects

How else can you create vintage-looking photos?



Mezzotint

The Mezzotint effect is a tonal process used in print, and it makes for a good scratch effect on photographs. Duplicate your layer and head to Filter>Pixelate>Mezzotint and then choose medium lines for this effect. Reduce Opacity to 50% to increase colour.



Overlays

There are loads of great photographic overlays on the web that you can use with your pictures to transform the tone. Even using generic paper or wall textures, desaturated (Cmd/Ctrl+Shift+U) on a new layer set to Overlay can give a retro feel to a modern picture.



Pointillize

While Pointillist art is always great for bright colours and big pixels, using the Pointillize filter – go to Filter>Pixelate>Pointillize – can also create some really good film-grain effects. Choose a low number of pixels to apply tiny white dots all over your picture's surface.

Create a coloured mosaic effect

Use Elements to throw a technicolour spin on any picture

It's hard trying to think of original, exciting spins to put on your pictures, especially if you're hoping to inject some colour into an otherwise dull photo. While there are plenty of ways that you can boost the vibrance and work on the saturation of a photo, doing something creative is perhaps a more rewarding activity.

A colourful mosaic is a great way to make a picture brighter and bolder. It's up to you what colours you use, how big the squares are, and exactly how the colours shine through the picture; it's a tutorial that you can apply to any kind of photo, and it's one that can produce unique results every time. You don't even have to use a square grid; you might choose to produce a mosaic from circles or custom selections.

Check out our guide on how to create this cool effect and experiment with all kinds of colours. You might want to choose random, bright hues, or you might want to try out a specific set of tones. The possibilities are endless with this project.



TEXTURES

Add a texture to your mosaic, such as stone or marble. Paste an image, set to Multiply and reduce Opacity to 10%.

What does it mean?

GRID – The Grid is a useful template that can be activated by pressing Ctrl/Cmd+'. It brings up a dotted grid over the top of your document, showing sizes and dimensions of your layers. It's particularly useful for snapping objects into place, and is used to create perfect alignment in your compositions.



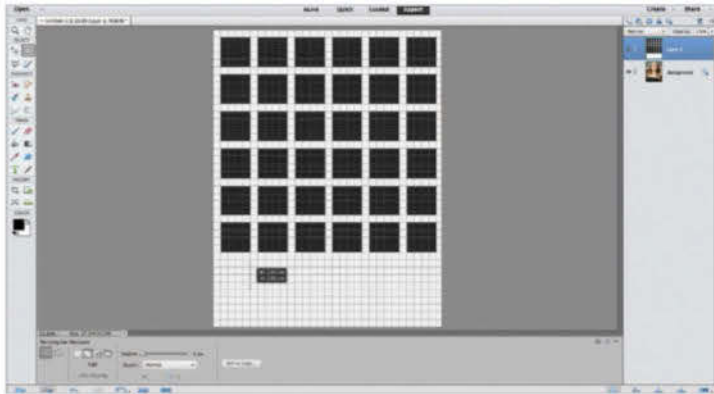
UNCOLOURED SQUARES

Leave some squares neither filled in with colour nor filled in with white to create this effect. It adds a naturalness back into the picture.

Source file available

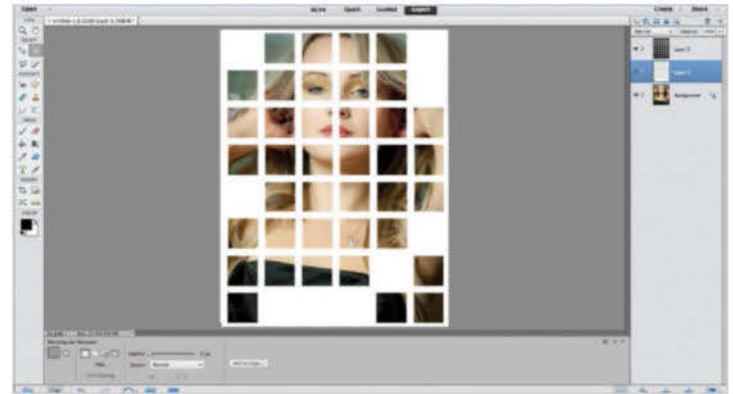
Learn this technique using the supplied files

Apply the mosaic Turn any old image into a colourful masterpiece



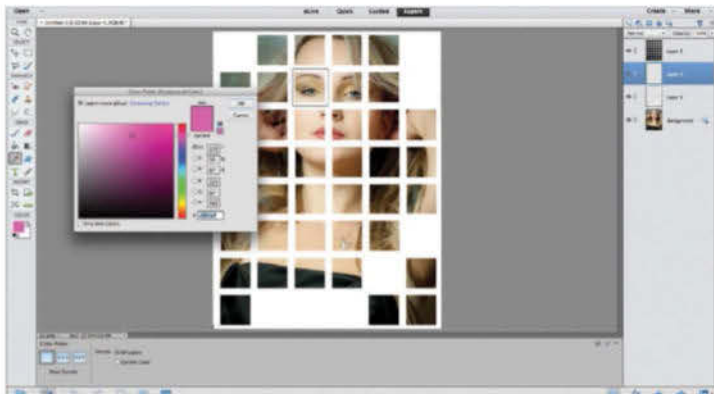
Create your squares

01 Go to View>Grid to open a snap-to guide to fill into. Create a white layer over the image and with black selected as your Foreground colour, start filling equally-placed squares in the picture. This is the grid from which you're going to fill colours onto the mosaic.



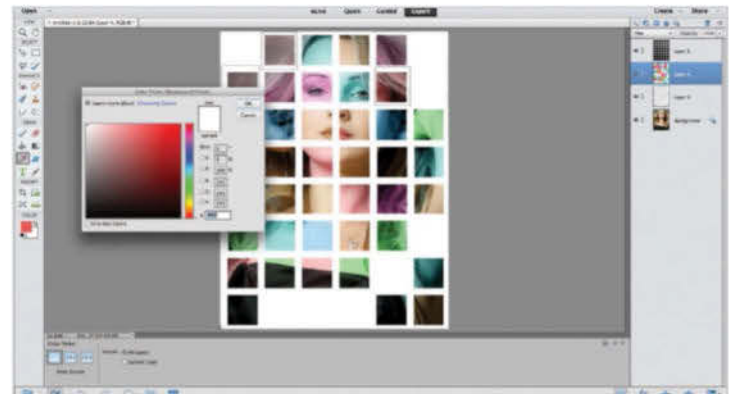
Perfect the grid

02 Set your grid layer to Screen. This eliminates black in the picture and leaves the white framing to separate colours of the mosaic. Adjust and position so the features of the subject show through the squares, and fill a few of the squares in white on the grid layer.



Pick your colours

03 Create a new layer beneath the grid layer. This is the one you're going to be placing colours onto. Select a square – it doesn't have to be neat, it just has to cover the frame space – and head to the Foreground swatch. Select a colour, or colours, to fill your square in.



Set the blend modes

04 Fill your square in and repeat across the picture. Set the blend mode of this layer to Color, and choose one colour for three to five random squares in the picture. Reduce the opacity of this layer or set the blend mode to Hue if you want to keep the effect more subtle.

Other blend modes What other effects do other blend modes create?



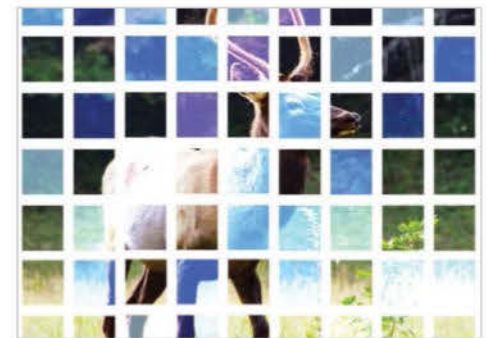
Screen

The Screen mode is used to turn dark pixels colourful, and thus it works perfectly for a mosaic if the original picture is underexposed. The darker the colour, the more the background will shine through the colour: white pixels stay 100% visible on Screen.



Exclusion

The Exclusion blend mode creates an inversion effect. The best way to hit upon a winning formula with this blend mode is to experiment with various different colours and see what looks good. Results can either look pleasingly psychedelic or just garish.



Linear Dodge

Another really great blend mode to use is Linear Dodge, as it takes account of lightness, hue and saturation when blending the colour into your mosaic. It can also create an effect similar to the Color and Screen modes, but it is not as drastic as either of them.

What does it mean?

FINGER PAINTING – Smudging blurs pixels in a certain direction, but by clicking the Finger Painting option, you can create trails of colour. Use this for smudging hair; choose lighter shades, and finger paint the colours into the picture to create highlights. Choose soft brushes and alter the Opacity.

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

MIX METHODS

Combine smudging and dabbing to achieve a painterly effect, keeping detail areas, such as the eyes, nice and sharp.



Paint with the Impressionist brush

Release your inner painter with the Impressionist brush in Elements

Impressionism was invented because of an artist's limitations. As Claude Monet was going blind, he still continued to paint; the results were understandably blurry and indistinct, but they produced dazzling, technicolour results that captured enough imaginations to start a movement.

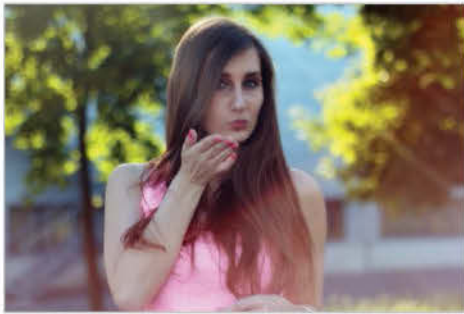
Likewise, the Impressionist brush in Photoshop Elements is there to combat the limitations of any budding digital painter. You can transform photos into stunning pieces just by brushing over them, and the tool gives you complete control when editing. But how do you wield the brush without creating a blurry mess?

The answer is one that can actually be found by studying Monet's work. The Impressionist brush is one that should be used delicately. In Elements, choosing the brush size is as important as knowing where to brush, and smudging can become as important as the actual painting. The transformation only begins with the brush strokes; much of the process is about smoothing edges and merging colours, in a similar way to how real-life painters smudge their work.

Let's look at three different photos and assess how the Impressionist brush can be used to turn all three into evocative digital paintings of which you can be proud.

Technique 1 A single portrait

Keep the focus in a painting by smudging and dabbing



Begin brushing details

01 Start off with a small brush and work on the eyes of your portrait. Brush the details of the face and get used to the tool. Choose the Dab option and try not to blur the picture too much yet, as the subject is the focus of the piece.



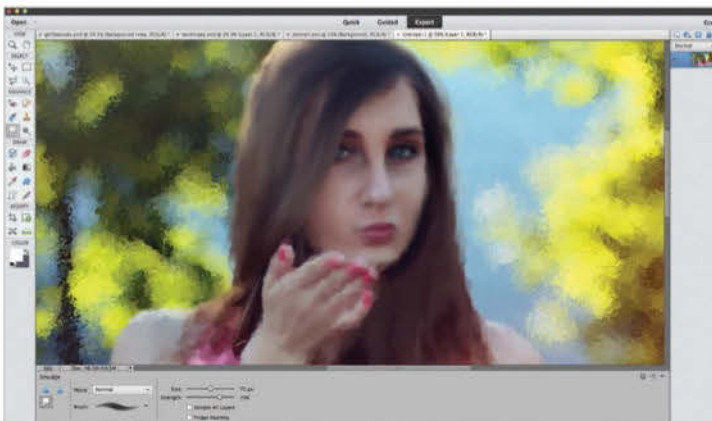
Build up brush strokes

02 Now start on the hair. Make your brush size a little larger for this, then work on the rest of the body and eventually the background. Experiment with different styles and use bigger strokes for less focus.

Expert tip

Study real Impressionists

All Photoshop projects start with a little inspiration, but by examining the likes of Monet, Manet and Degas, you can get a good idea of what works. Search for Impressionist paintings, and decide on the approach you want; some works use more detail, while some focus more on the colour and the shapes in the picture. From here, you can discover a world of inspiration, and that's without touching on the likes of Van Gogh and the post-Impressionist world.



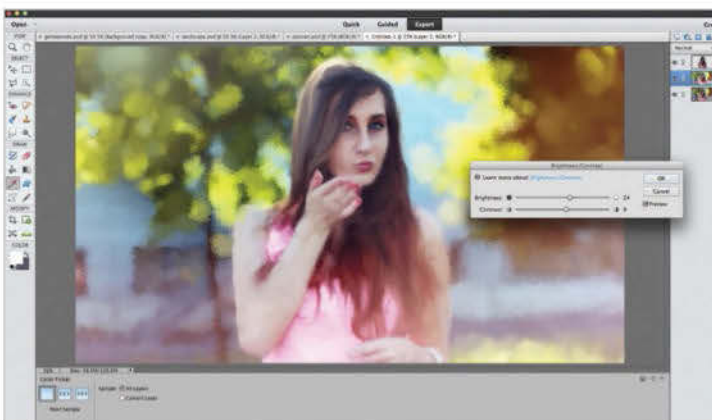
Smudge the face

03 Select the Smudge tool and start smudging the hair for a more realistic look. Move on to the features of the face; follow the curves of the picture, and this will add more detail without making the picture look photographic.



Brush and smudge more

04 Touch up the picture with more dabs and smudges. Try and get the right balance so your painting looks both smudged and painted, and even change the Opacity of the Impressionist brush to help with this. Use the Dodge tool on the eyes to whiten.



Bring out colours

05 Sort the colouring and contrast of the picture via the Enhance option on the menu. Impressionism works well both with pastel shades and bright, saturated pictures; perhaps just select the subject and duplicate that part of the picture to stand out from the backdrop.



Touch up overall

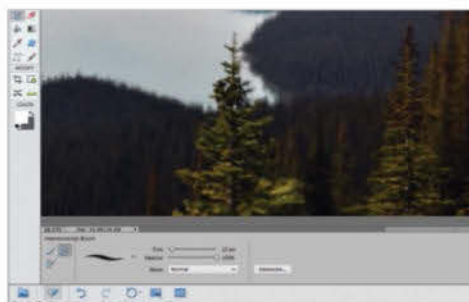
06 A nice final touch is to add an overlay effect; you'll find canvas and paint textures as free resources that can be pasted onto your picture with a Soft Light blend mode. These give the illusion of a real painting!

Technique 2

Natural landscapes

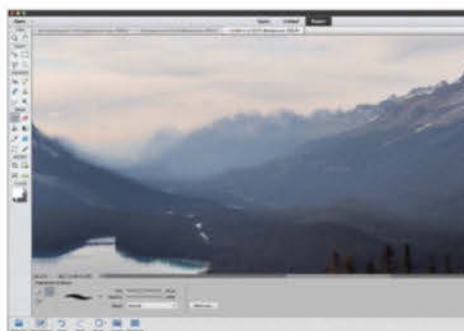
Create an idyllic, painted landscape using the same dabbing techniques

Landscapes might generally be easier than portraits to paint, but there is a similarly fine line of deftness involved when it comes to bringing out the details in a sprawling natural scene. By following the same steps as portrait painting, you can re-imagine a vista of beautiful rolling hills as an oil-painted masterpiece; the trick, though, is in knowing where to apply these techniques on a larger scale, and when to hold back.



Deftly paint details

01 Just as we did with the portrait, we're going to focus on the details of this picture, particularly the trees and the edges of the mountains. Use a small brush and increase size as you move onto less focused parts of the image.



Build up brush size

02 Create aerial perspective by using a bigger brush in the far distance. When working on landscape pieces, this blurriness works well; in this case it looks foggy. Try out tight medium brushes on the sky.



Adjust colouring & overlays

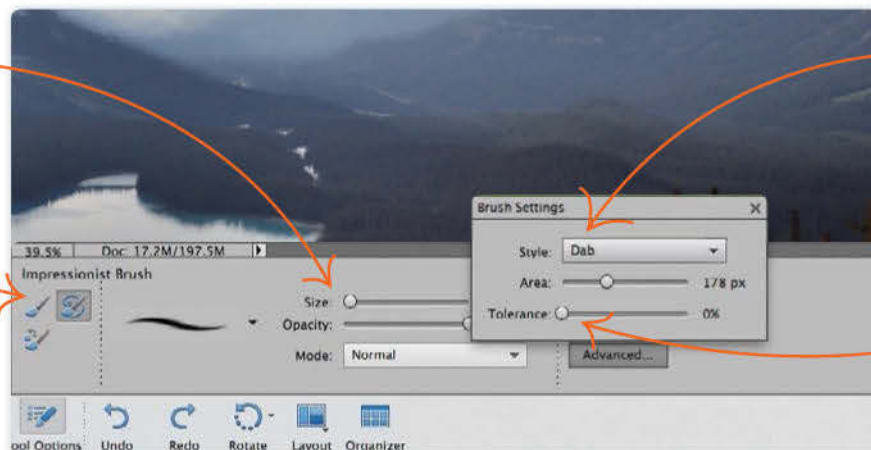
03 Once you've painted the entire picture, again add a textured overlay, but this time, add a new layer with a blend mode of Soft Light and Opacity of 50% to paint colour where needed. With Impressionism, brighter paintings often look more painting-like.

SIZE, OPACITY AND MODE

Choose how big and how prominent you want your brush to be with these trustworthy appearance options.

BRUSH

Select a soft brush for a true Impressionist feel, but experiment with various styles to collage your painting.



STYLE

Decide whether you want to paint with dabs, strokes or curls, and how big those strokes should be.

TOLERANCE

You can focus on a certain colour-based area when painting, but choose a Tolerance of 0% for full control.

Technique 3

Portrait and landscape

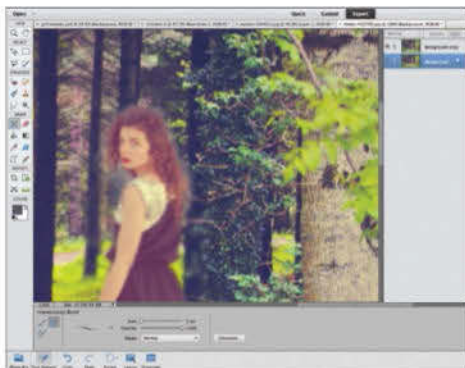
Incorporate the two painting techniques into one picture

Now we've covered how to create a portrait and how to shape a landscape, how about combining the two? It's not quite as simple as merging the two pictures together, as the focus of a photo with both a subject and a background is slightly different to the two pictures on their own. Let's assess the focus of a photo with both a strong foreground and background.



Paste the subject

01 Select your subject from its original photo using the Quick Selection tool and the Refine Edge tool. Paste them into the new picture and position them realistically into the piece. Adjust light if need be (Enhance>Adjust Lighting).



Merge and brush

02 Merge the foreground and the background together and begin dabbing details with the Impressionist brush. Remember that facial features aren't so important when the viewer's focus isn't solely on the foreground.

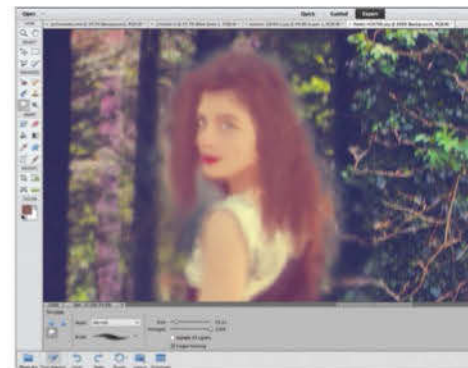
BACKDROP

Begin painting details in the background and increase the brush size as you go to establish depth of field.



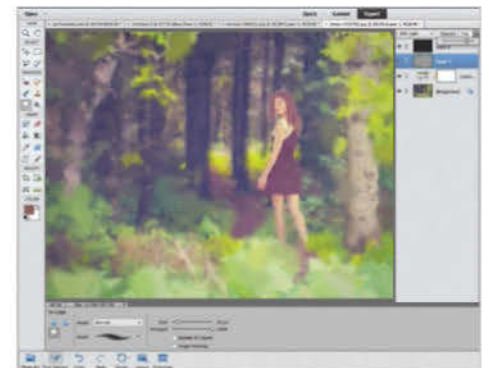
SUBJECT

Though the most focus must go on the subject, it doesn't have to be quite as detailed as with a portrait.



Smudge where necessary

03 We're not going to smudge the details of our subject's face too much in this picture, as she's sharing the focus with the backdrop. More extensive smudging can be made on the hair and the background of the picture, though.



Finish up

04 Once brushed completely, add overlays or filters and use bigger brush sizes to show focus in the picture. Big brushes work well in leafy paintings, and smaller brushes are good for adding detail to the trunks of trees.

Photo projects

Take the next step and get creative with these advanced project ideas

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Share your inspirational images

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in Elements
Make your own digital corkboard

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Make your profile stand out

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book cover
Grab a reader's attention

150 Create a Tumblr collage
Have fun reliving memories with this
cool technique

154 Apply a jigsaw effect to
your photos
Turn your pictures into puzzles



SIMPLE SCRAPBOOKS

Photoshop Elements is loaded with preset goodies to enable you to quickly build stunning digital scrapbooks.



Source file available

Learn these techniques using the supplied files

Build a scrapbook in Elements

It's easy to get started with digital scrapbooking using Photoshop Elements' built-in options

Image-editing software opens up a whole world of creative options for displaying and sharing your photos. Digital scrapbooking is incredibly popular and if you already have Photoshop Elements, you have all the tools you need to create striking scrapbook pages.

Over these pages we will show you some really simple ways to get started with your first scrapbook project. We'll use the Elements' Photo Book creation option to show you some basic templates as a first step. This is a nice introduction to page layouts, as most of the

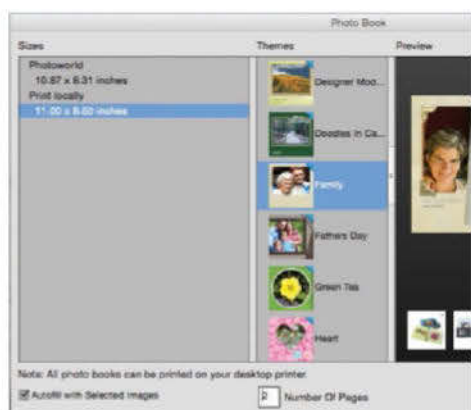
work is done for you. Moving on, we'll look at how you can build up a page from scratch using Elements' asset library – you can drag and drop the 'building blocks' from the Graphics pane to design your page. Finally, we'll look at how to design a scrapbook cover, bringing in your own text and imagery.

Using these skills, you can move on to create more and more complex-looking scrapbook pages, and wow your friends and family with your amazing designs.



Technique 1 Use the Photo Book tool

Change layouts and add images



Pick a layout

01 Go to Create>Photo Book. This will bring up the template options. Choose Print Locally to see the relevant templates. If you have the images you want to use open in Elements, tick the Autofill box, but it doesn't matter if not. Pick a template and click OK.



Change layouts

02 Under the Layouts pane are lots of arrangements. Pick any layout and drag it onto a page to apply. You can click on the individual frames to add images from your computer, or drag them from the Photo Bin if they are already open.



Add assets

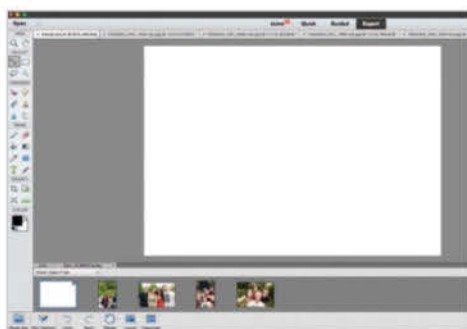
03 Switch to the Graphics pane and drag in new frames, backgrounds and text – drag and drop where you want it and Elements will apply it to the page. You can make the assets bigger or smaller, rotate them and move them around.

Technique 2

Design your own page

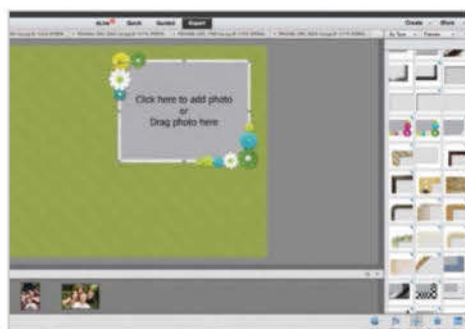
Create your own scrapbook pages from scratch

After trying out the Photo Book options, you might be ready to go it alone and try assembling a scrapbook page from scratch. You can use exactly the same process as before, by dragging and dropping in assets directly in Elements, but you will have access to the entire catalogue of assets, not just a select few per template. Experimentation is key here – you don't know if something looks good until you try!



Set up your page

01 Go to File>New>Blank File and create a canvas in the size you want. Next, open up the images for the first page so they're in the Photo Bin. Go to Graphics in the right-hand pane and choose By Type and Backgrounds from the drop-down menus.



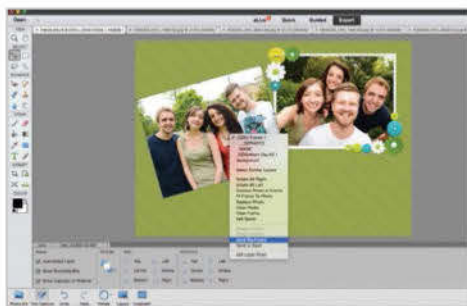
Add a frame

02 Drag in a background from the Graphics pane. Change the graphics type to Frames, drag in a picture frame and position. Resize using the corner handles. To add a picture, click the frame to browse your computer or drag from the Photo Bin.



Line up your photo

03 When your image is imported, you will see controls. The slider lets you scale the image up and down, and you can rotate it within the frame. If you change your mind, you can drag in a new photo or click the second icon next to the slider to upload a new one.



Arrange photos

04 Add in a second frame and bring in another image. You can rotate the whole frame by clicking on it and hovering over the corners until you see the rotate icon. Ctrl/right-click on the image and you can use Send Backward/Forward to change the layer order.



Embellish your page

05 Change the Type in the Graphics pane, this time to Graphics. You can alter By Type to By Color or By Theme to help narrow your search down. Drag in any assets you want on your page, positioning and scaling them as you go.



Add text

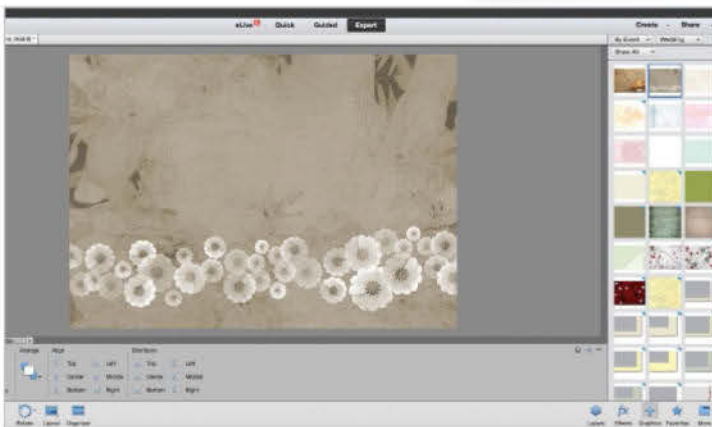
06 To add your own text to the page, choose the Text tool from the tool bar on the left of the screen. Type your text, then use the Tool Options to change the font, colour and size to suit. You can also use the Move tool to position your text.

Technique 3

Build a bespoke cover page

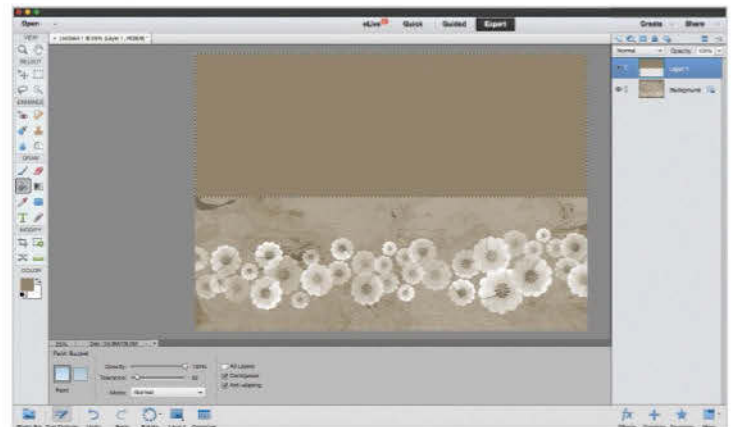
All good scrapbooks need a front page to represent the contents

Professional scrapbooks generally have a cover page and that's exactly what we're going to make here. We won't be using any images, but can still create a striking design using the assets available in Photoshop Elements. We're also going to customise the look by delving into the Layers pane for the first time in this project. All of your normal editing tools are available to use.



Pick a theme

01 Create a new blank file as before. In the Graphics pane, you can change By Type to By Event and this filters the graphics to suit. We've gone for Wedding and then selected a background that suits the theme of the scrapbook we're designing.



Get creative

02 We want to break out of the constraints of the background, so switch to the Layers pane. Use the Rectangular Marquee tool to draw a selection over the top half of the page. Use the Color Picker Tool to select a colour from the background and then fill the selection.



Add more assets

03 Switch back to the Graphics pane. We have decided to add a ribbon across the divide in the background, which we found by using the By Word filtering option and searching for 'ribbon'. We also found a frame that suits our design to host text.



Final touches

04 By using the search options in the Graphics pane effectively, you can find exactly what you need easily. We searched for 'love' and 'hearts' to find our extra elements, and it took mere minutes to add them in. We also added some text to finish the cover off.

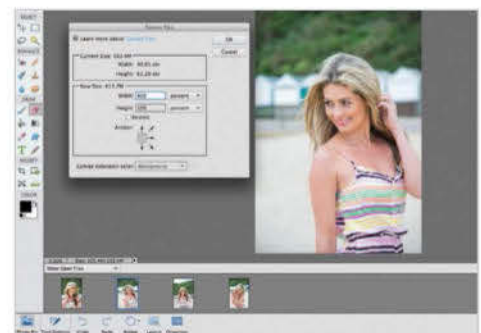


Make creative collages in Elements

Design your own portrait photo strips with this four-way gem

The beauty of digital cameras is that you can take an unlimited number of pictures without worrying about any cost. The downside of this, however, is that it is easy to end up with a huge batch of images you would like to display, but no room to do so. Not to worry; if you're looking for a different way to present a series of images, then take a look at this colourful collage. This effect works best if you have four images that are

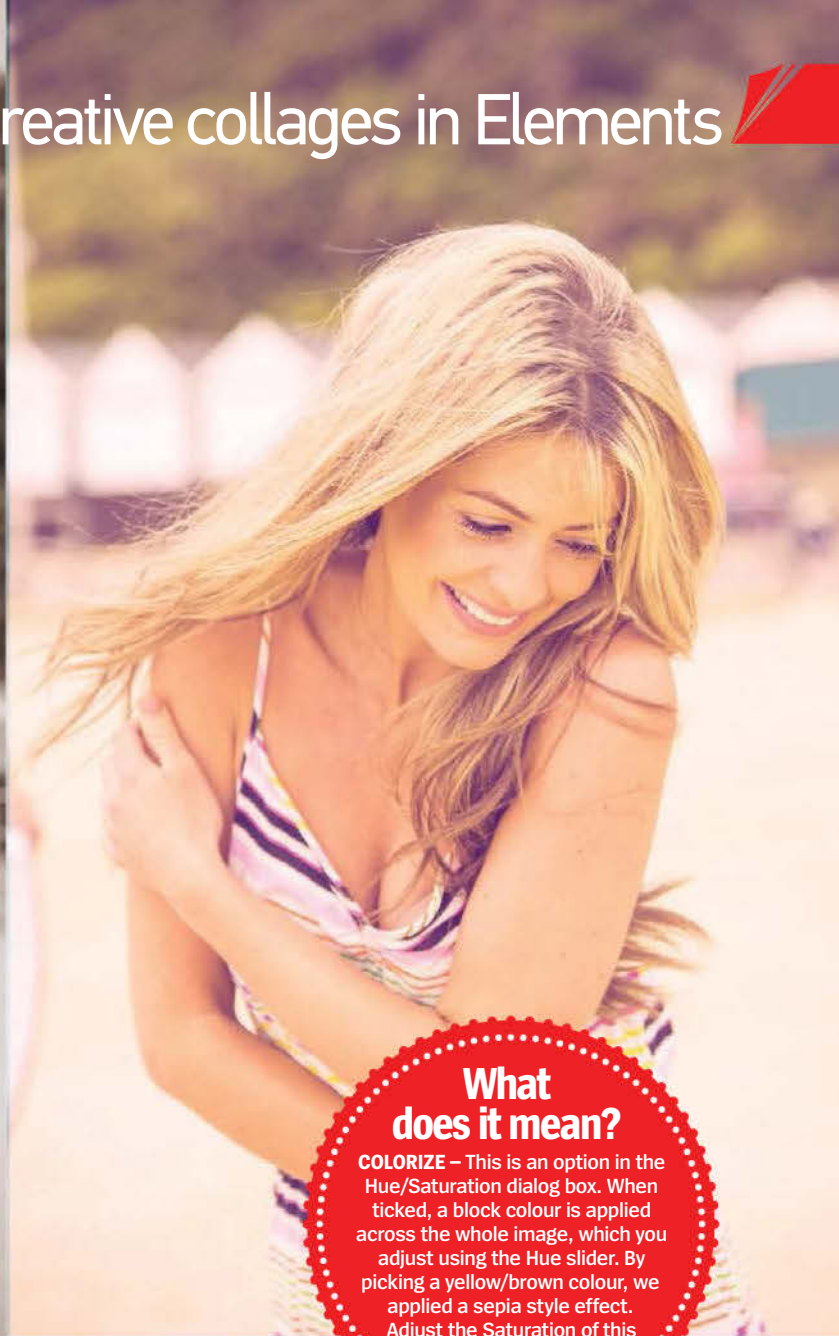
similar in topic, as with our outside portrait photos, all of which were taken under the same lighting. The collage is surprisingly easy to achieve. You can open all of your images and use the first one as the template to extend the canvas for the other images to sit next in line. You can then use adjustment layers and layer masks to selectively apply an alternative creative effect to each one in the photo line-up.



Prepare the canvas

01 Go to the first image and double-click the layer's thumbnail to unlock it. Visit **Image>Resize>Canvas Size**. In **New Size**, change units to **Percent** and make the **Width** **400%**. Click the middle-left arrow so that the canvas is extending to the right only.

Make creative collages in Elements



What does it mean?

COLORIZE – This is an option in the Hue/Saturation dialog box. When ticked, a block colour is applied across the whole image, which you adjust using the Hue slider. By picking a yellow/brown colour, we applied a sepia style effect. Adjust the Saturation of this colour edit to lessen its strength.

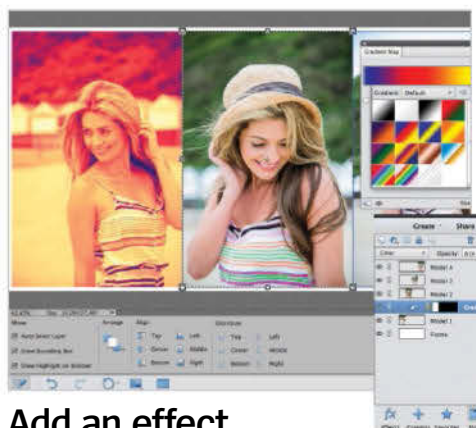
Arty photo effects

Build your collage and add cool effects



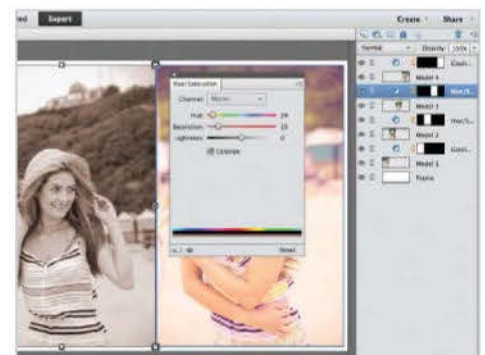
Build the collage

02 Go to your second image and Edit>Select All, Edit>Copy. Go back to your newly extended canvas and select Edit>Copy to paste in the second photo. Use the arrow keys on your keyboard to nudge it into place next to the first image. Do the same for the third and fourth images.



Add an effect

03 Go to the first image, hold down Cmd/Ctrl and click on the layer thumbnail to select the photo area. Go to the adjustment layer menu and pick Gradient Map; a mask will be applied with the selection area. Pick the Blue, Red, Yellow gradient, set the blend mode to Color and lower the Opacity.



More effects

04 Repeat for the other images, adding a different effect each time. Our second effect is a Hue/Saturation layer with Saturation at 0; the third is another Hue/Saturation layer with Colorize ticked and a Sepia tone colour applied. The fourth effect uses a Gradient Map (Violet, Orange) set to Screen mode.



SHOWCASE IMAGES
Create a template to use in future projects when you want to show off your work.

What does it mean?

CLIPPING MASKS – These are great for creating interesting effects. The base layer of your clipping mask, which could be a shape or text, simply defines boundaries for the top layer – usually an image. It essentially enables you to reveal a certain portion of a picture through a specified shape.

Create a mood board

Share your inspirational images by creating an artistic mood board in Elements

Mood boards are a fantastic way to share ideas and source some inspiration for your next big project or event. Placing your designs down on paper will not only make it easier to plan ahead but also visualise the end result. With that being said, mood boards are also a great way of showcasing your existing work with others.

Creating a mood board is surprisingly quick and easy to do in Elements, even for beginners. Join us in this tutorial as we demonstrate two different techniques, with at least one guaranteed to suit your style. In technique one you'll learn how to create a structured mood board that's perfect for promotional purposes.

Follow the steps and discover how to create your own unique mood board template using the Shape tool. You'll then find out how to add images using clipping masks and apply text. Technique two is ideal if you're keen to make a more creative mood board. We cover how to cut, copy and paste images onto a blank document using selection tools and layers.

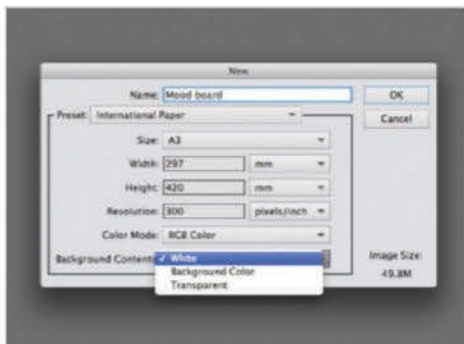
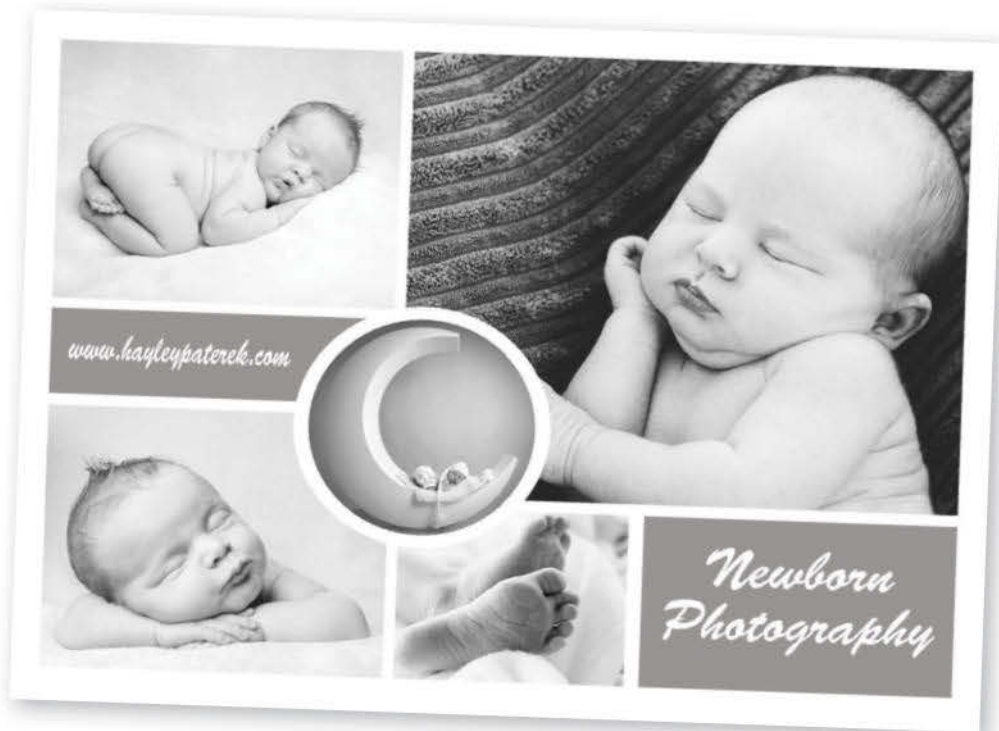
To start constructing your own inspirational mood board today, get together a selection of start images that share a particular colour tone or theme. You can then follow along with the practical steps and advice we've shared with you here.

Technique 1

Use clipping masks

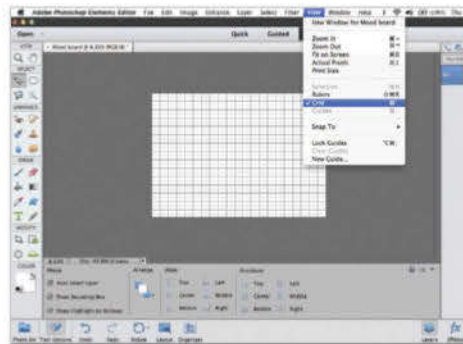
Create a professional mood board using clipping masks in Elements

Follow this technique in Elements and discover how to create a professional-looking mood board that's perfect for showcasing your work. You'll learn how to create a stylish modern template using the Grid and Shape tool, add images with clipping masks, and apply text for a more personalised mood board.



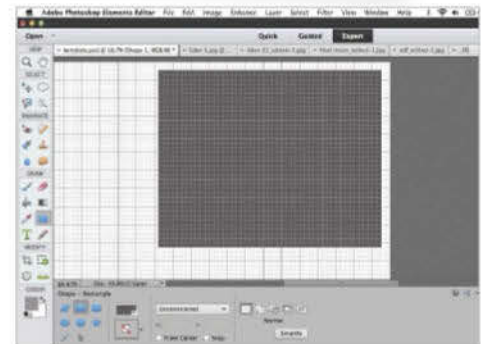
Create a blank board

01 Load Elements and select the Expert mode. Create a blank page via File>New>Blank File. Once the dialog screen is open, select International Paper from the Preset menu and pick the A3 paper size. Ensure the Background Contents is set to White and click OK.



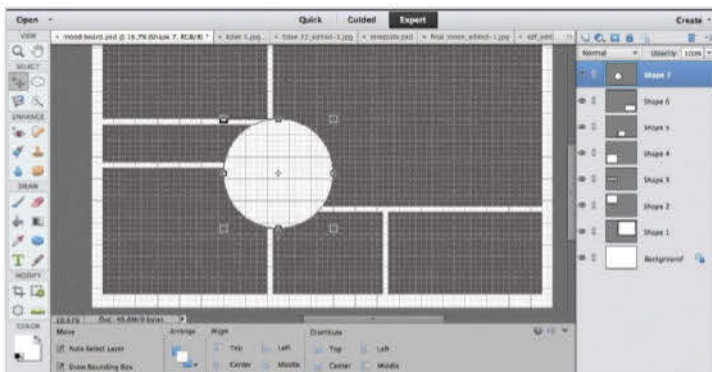
Select the Shape tool

02 Rotate the page to landscape orientation via Image>Rotate>90° Left. Now activate the grid lines on screen via View>Grid. To start building your template, you need to add shapes. Select the Rectangle tool within the Tools' palette Draw section. In the bottom menu, change the colour to grey.



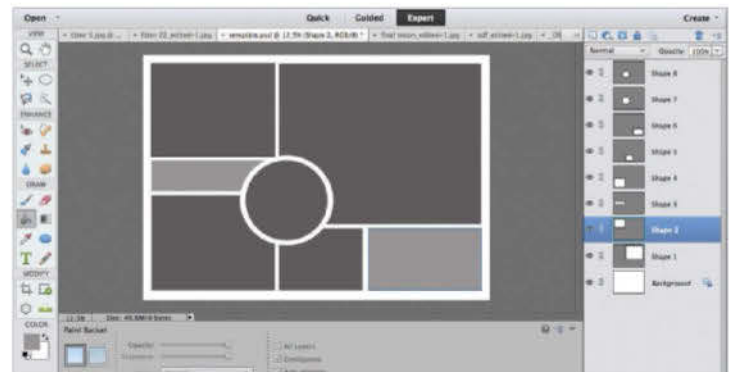
Construct the template

03 Zoom in to a corner of your blank page and set the cursor down. Leave space for a margin to frame the board and then slowly drag out your first shape, keeping in mind an image will be positioned here. Leave a small, consistent gap between each box and continue adding square or rectangular shapes.



Customise the layout

04 If you want to break up the template slightly, try adding a circle or custom shape on top. Simply select the new shape style at the bottom. Explore the Custom Shape menu for a variety of different options. Once you've created your mood-board template, remove the grid via View>Grid.



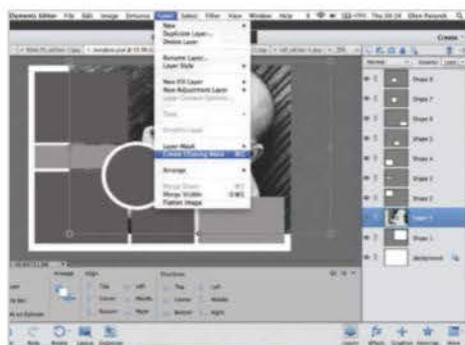
Load all images

05 You don't have to place an image in every shape; fill one or two in with a different colour using the Paint Bucket tool; you can add text on top later. Now open all of the images you want to add to your mood board. Select one and using the Move tool, drag it over to where you want it on your board.



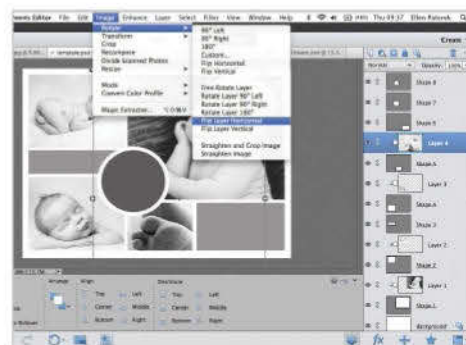
Open the Layers palette

06 Resize the image by adjusting the corner anchor point and then move it on top of the shape you want it to appear in. Now ensure that the Layers palette is open by selecting the Layers tab at the bottom. The image you moved over should appear in here as Layer 1.



Create a clipping mask

07 Click on this layer and drag it so that it sits on top of the shape layer you want it to fill. Go to Layer>Create Clipping Mask. The image should now appear within the shape. You can use the Move tool again to reposition or resize the image within the shape's confines if necessary.



Place the images

08 Continue adding all of your images to the shapes following the previous steps. If you want to flip an image within a shape you can do so by selecting it and then going to Image>Rotate>Flip Layer Horizontal. Once all of the images are in place, select your blank shape for text.



Add text

09 Now click on the Text tool within the tools palette and drag a text square over the blank shape. A text layer should appear above the shape layer in the Layers palette. You can now adjust the font type, size and colour in the menu box at the bottom and then type out your text.



Flatten layers and save

10 At this stage it's still possible to adjust the position of images or text. Simply move layers and clipping masks around in the Layers palette until you're 100 per cent happy with the result. You can then go to Layer>Flatten image and save your mood board.

CLIPPING MASKS

Once you've created your template, add images using clipping masks. It will help prevent photos from overlapping and keep everything orderly on the page.

CUSTOM TEMPLATES

Create your own custom mood-board template following the steps. Save it as a PSD file to use again, and adjust the layout to suit another project.



LAYERS PALETTE

Each shape or image you add to your mood board will appear in the Layers palette. To adjust their size or positioning, simply select the appropriate layer here first.

ADDING TEXT

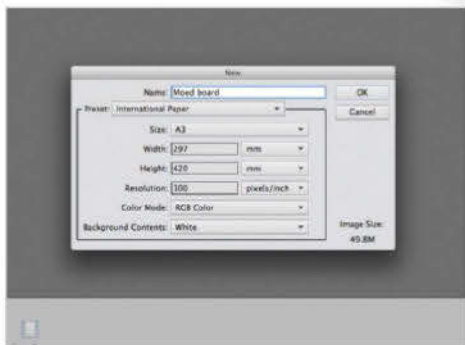
Use the Text tool to add a personalised message or your details to a mood board. You can also customise the fonts to suit your own style.

Technique 2

Work with layers

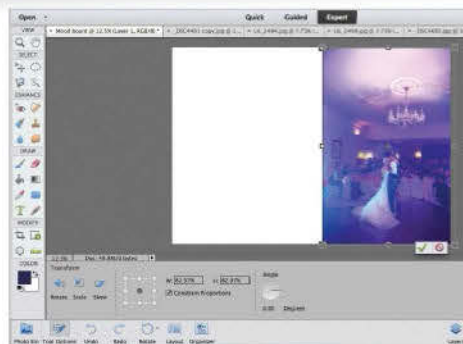
Construct a creative mood board using selection tools and layers

If you want to get a little more creative and experiment with layering images on top of one another, follow the steps outlined below. This technique is quick and simple and doesn't require you to build a template first. Simply get your inspirational images together and discover how to use selection tools and layers in Elements for a truly fantastic effect.



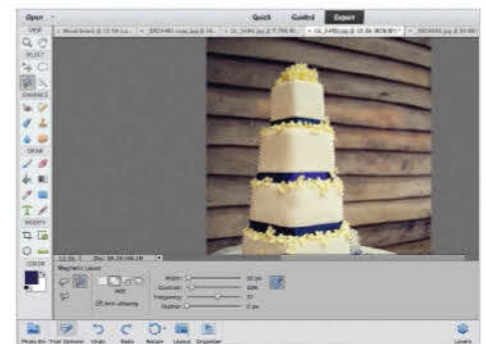
Create a blank page

01 Open Elements and click the Expert tab. Now go to File>New>Blank File. In the dialog box choose International Paper from the Preset drop-down menu and Size: A3. The Background contents should be set to White. Click OK and once the blank page opens, go to Image>Rotate>90° Left.



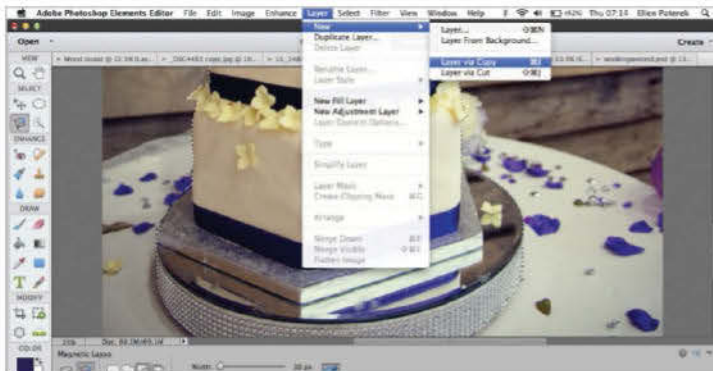
Add and resize images

02 Open the images you want to add to your mood board via File>Open. They will appear on separate tabs along the top. Select one and grab the Move tool from the Tools palette. Drag and drop the image over your mood board. Adjust its size by dragging in or out on one of the corner anchor points.



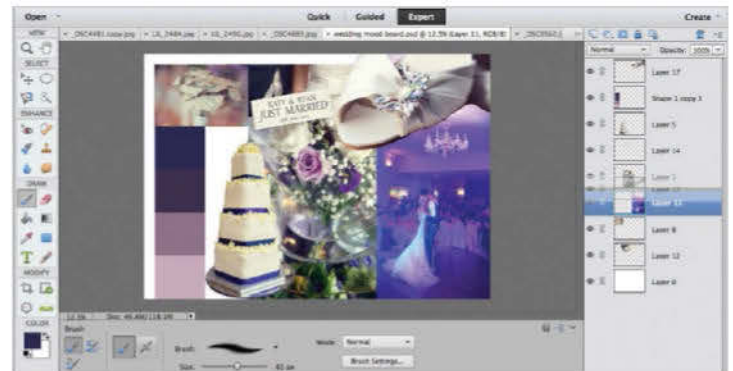
Make a selection

03 To cut and paste only part of an image, select the image and grab the Magnetic Lasso tool in the tool bar. Create a selection by adding an anchor point to the edge of the object you want to select. Now carefully trace around the edge and join the last anchor point with the first.



Create a new layer

04 Once selected, you can add or subtract areas from your selection by changing the selection mode via the control bar along the bottom (Add/Subtract). Once complete, create a new separate layer of the selection via, Layer>New>Layer via Copy. Now click on the Layers tab at the bottom to open the Layers palette.



Paste and overlap

05 Again, use the Move tool and drag the new cutout layer over to your mood board. You can now resize it on the page. Then continue adding other images. If you want one image to overlap another, move the layer up in the Layers palette. Once happy, flatten the layers via Layer>Flatten Image.



ONE DESIGN, MANY USES

Leaflets are perfect for any business to highlight and summarise a service, but they can also be used for social occasions, such as gathering together holiday photos.

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

Design a tri-fold leaflet

Measure out and create your own beautiful leaflet in Photoshop and Photoshop Elements

Leaflets are designed to be informative, but it's also paramount that they grab your attention, with a flashy, exciting look. This might be a stumbling block for anyone using basic templates, even anyone getting them printed online, but thanks to Photoshop and Elements, you can put a little creativity back into basic leaflets.

As with the most fun tutorials, there really is limitless potential for what you can do with a leaflet, and not just content-wise. Everything from the style of the textures you use to the pictures and layout is completely up to you, but the important thing to bear in mind is the

split of the pages. Tri-fold leaflets work best when you create clear page divisions, while still keeping a cohesive design; we've gone for the same font, similar pictures, and a red gradient, but split up the leaflet into decipherable sections.

Ultimately, though, it's completely up to you. There are a hundred ways to create a classy leaflet, but by following these steps, you can at least learn the foundations of what makes a leaflet look good, and how to structure and fold one. Check out our three sections and then have a go yourself.

Technique 1

Set up your page design

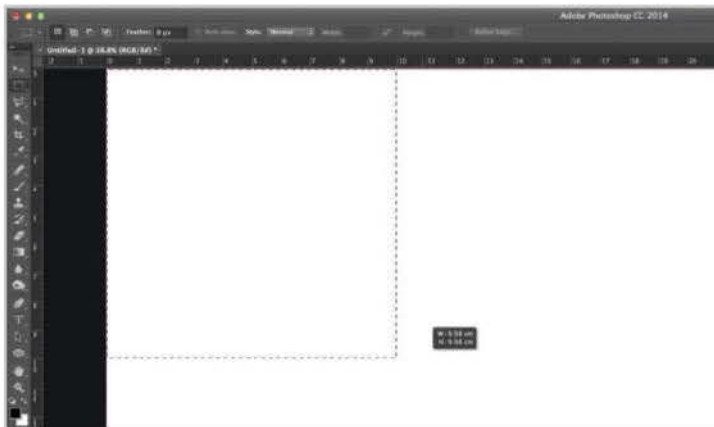
Lay out the basics of your page before you get more creative

Things can get extremely fiddly trying to work out which page goes where on a tri-fold leaflet, so it's important to get all the dimensions right before you work on it.

It can also be an idea to label a piece of paper and practice folding, just to get a good idea of how your leaflet will look. A bit of time spent on preparation will save a lot of time rectifying mistakes!

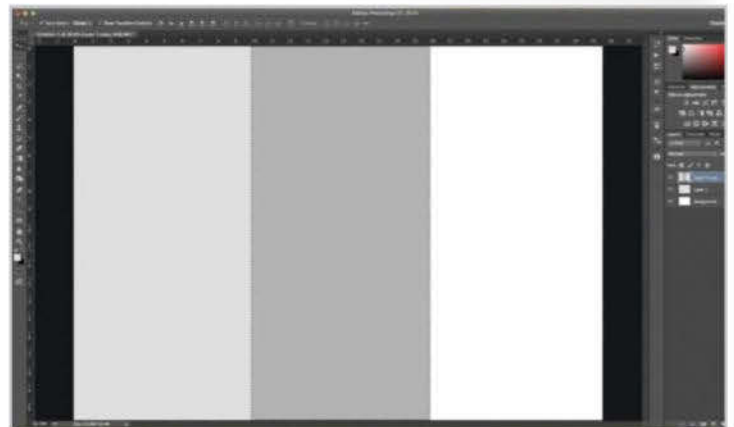
TEXTURES

These textures are from a sample by The Shop on the FileSilo – they're perfect for this leaflet project.



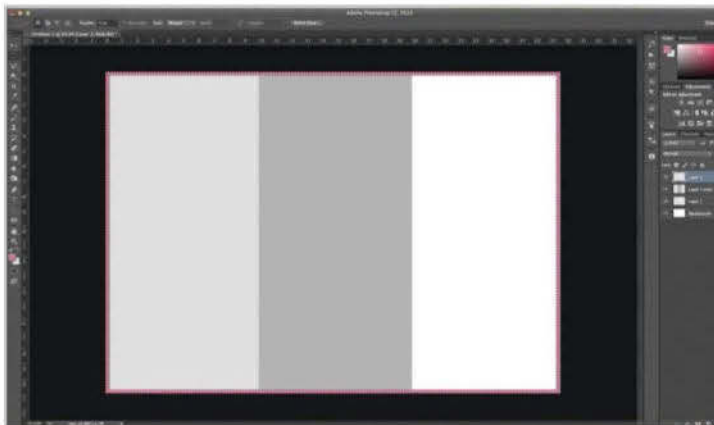
Set up your page

01 Assuming that you want to print onto A4 paper, simply create a new document and choose the A4 option. Make sure your page is landscape, and select a box that is 10cm wide and the height of the page. Go to View>Rulers to activate Rulers to use as guides.



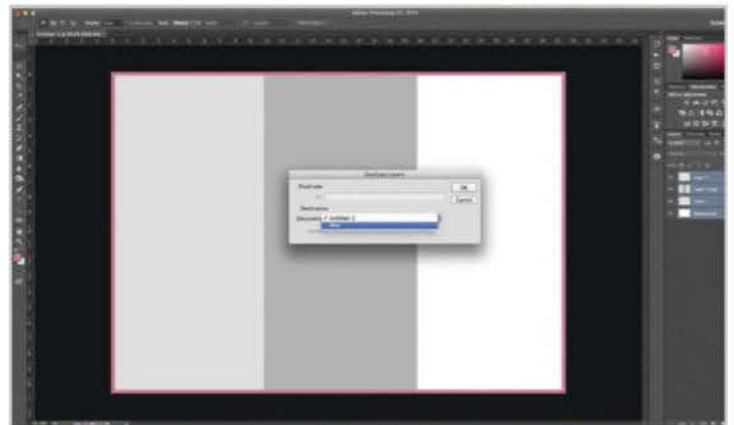
Create separate pages

02 Add a new layer and fill in your first selection with a grey to distinguish it from the background. Duplicate this, darken the colour slightly, and place perfectly adjacent to the first selection. These will be the pages that you fold, with the furthest right being the cover.



Add a margin

03 Make a selection around the outside of your document and fill in another colour. A margin can help stop your printer from cropping the design later on in the procedure, and it leaves you to design further in the centre.



Duplicate to a new document

04 Select all your layers and Ctrl/right-click before duplicating to a new document. This new document will form your inner pages, but remember to rotate everything 180 degrees to place the smallest page on the left, so it matches the outside.

Technique 2

Add important details

Apply the nuts and bolts to your leaflet

Now you've got the structure of your leaflet all decided, it's time to get more creative with how your it actually looks. We're going to go ahead and add textures, pictures and all the other necessary information to fill out the leaflet – you might want to go for an overall theme to tie everything together, but we're just going for a smart, cohesive red design.



There is extraordinary wildlife around the forest, including lots of deer. Dogs must be kept under control while out and about and it is a good idea to make sure they don't roam too far in the garden.

As well as deer, the forest is also home to foxes, badgers and many different species of bird. There are three huts located throughout the forest for bird-watching.



This cottage is situated in a small town in the centre of the New Forest. It's only five minutes' drive from the train station and there's a supermarket within walking distance.

There is a beautiful walk that you can take that leads straight from the garden. It runs from the bottom of a hill and loops around to the village hall. It's perfect for dog-walking and has several spots for taking photos.



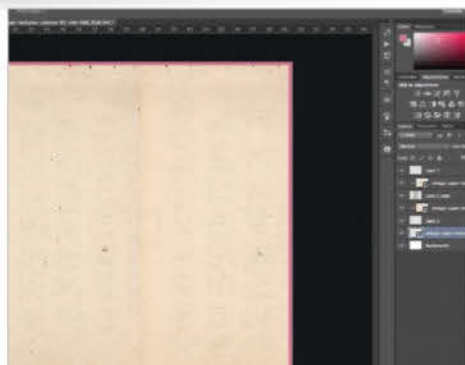
The cottage has three bedrooms, a living room, a dining room, a kitchen and a utility room. It has its own dishwasher and washing machine (which is situated in the utility room) and there's a reasonably big garden.

There is internet connection via the wifi box and the password is supplied. There is a landline too, given that the area receives very little signal!



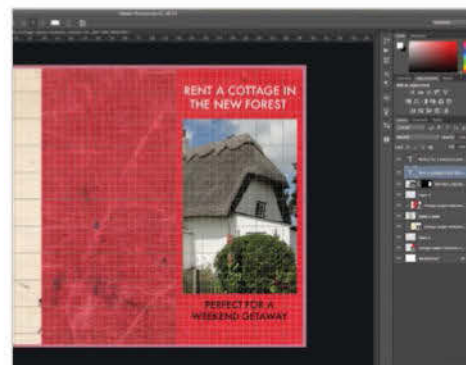
Add your outer textures

05 Now it's time to add textures: place your red textures as so, and a beige one on the left. The centre area is going to form the back of the leaflet, and the right side is the front. So this leaflet will look red on the outside and beige on the inside.



Add inner textures

06 Add the other textures to the other document. These particular textures are a sample from The Shop. They're great for this particular project as they give a worn, vintage feel to the leaflet, which has the theme of a holiday cottage.



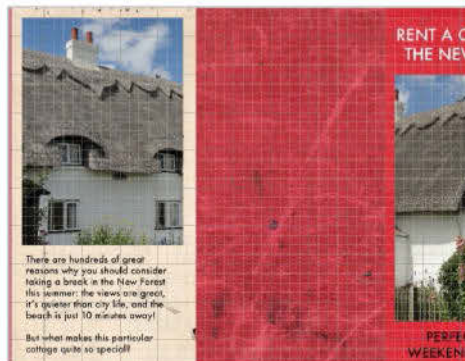
Design your cover

07 Next, we're going to place a picture onto the cover and add some text. Hold down and drag the Text tool to create a text box, and make a selection in your picture before cropping, to keep a good size. Use Grids to help (Cmd/Ctrl+').



Create the inside

08 On the inside, we're going to use the three pages each to display a separate facet of information. The pictures are cropped using the same technique as in the previous step, and the text uses the same font and colour, for cohesion of design.



Write an introduction

09 The first document has one beige page left over. This is the first page you see when opening, so it's up to you how you use it. We've gone for the same format as the inside of the leaflet, but written an introduction to the information.



Make a contact page

10 Finally, use the back page to add contact details. You might want to add a logo as this is a commercial leaflet, or a photo of yourself if it's a personal one. The choice is yours. Choose a minimal look to keep it plain and informative, though.

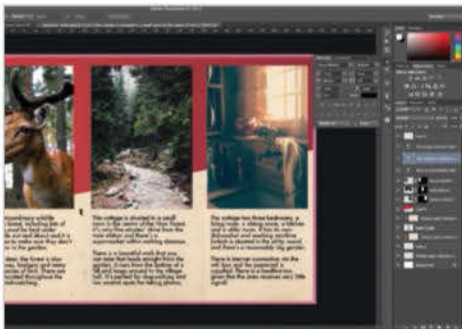
Technique 3

Finish and then fold

Print off your leaflet and complete the project

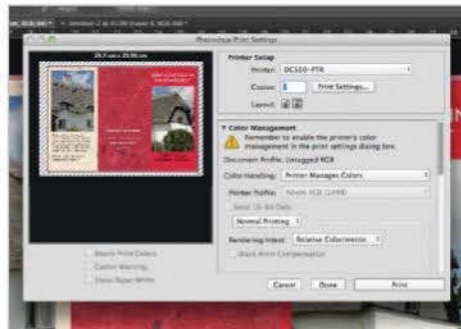
With everything else done, now comes perhaps the trickiest part of all: actually folding up your finished leaflet.

The folding shouldn't be difficult if you've measured correctly. Some printers print on two sides, so check the option to print double-sided. Otherwise you need some glue!



Add finishing touches

11 With the basis of your leaflet now done, why not add some extra flourishes? This might involve brushes to brighten up the picture, but we've gone for a stylish gradient (90% Opacity, Multiply) across the pages of the leaflet.



Print it

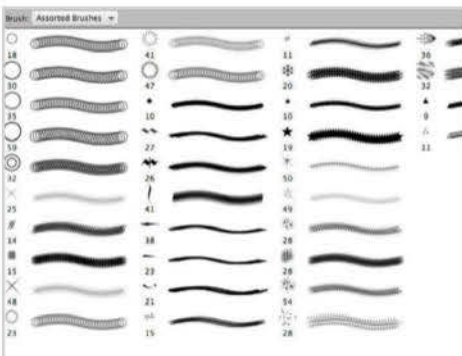
12 Go to File>Print, or save your pictures and import them in another program to print. We're going to want to print double-sided, and for both of these pictures to be in exactly the same position on the page, ready to fold.



Fold it

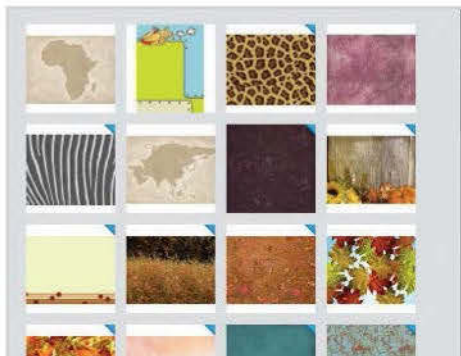
13 With the leaflet laid down with the inner pages facing you, fold the right-hand page inwards first, and then the left-hand page in. There should be a slight gap between the cover and the introduction page for you to open the leaflet.

Elements extras Use Elements to add neat flourishes to your final leaflet



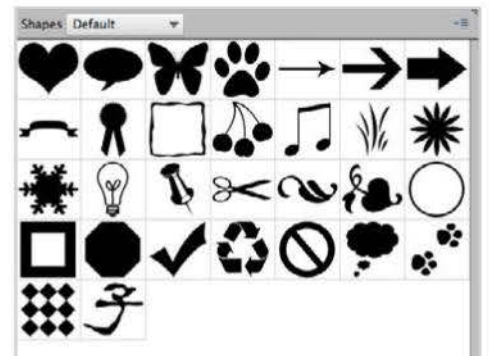
Brushes

Elements ships with a whole host of novelty brushes that look great when scattered across pictures. Simply spray them over the textures and the backgrounds of your leaflet, and you can add an extra personalised touch, or just a bit of extra colour.



Graphics

Instead of adding textures, why not use Elements' own Graphics tab? It's situated at the bottom-right of the screen, next to Layers and offers a range of bright and coloured backgrounds. These are ideal for building upon in a leaflet.



Shapes

Shapes are always a useful way to add some extra fun to any project, and they could add a nice touch to your leaflet. Choose anything, from musical notes to paw prints, and try placing them in the corners of pictures, for a collage effect.

Photo projects

OTHER OBJECTS

Create notes, receipts or other decorative elements.

STICK A PIN IN IT

Use real photos of drawing pins to 'attach' images.

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

POLAROID FRAMES

Introduce digital frames, such as these Polaroid ones, to give the impression of real photos being attached to a board.

Create fun displays in Elements

Make your very own digital corkboard to preserve those special memories, photos and souvenirs

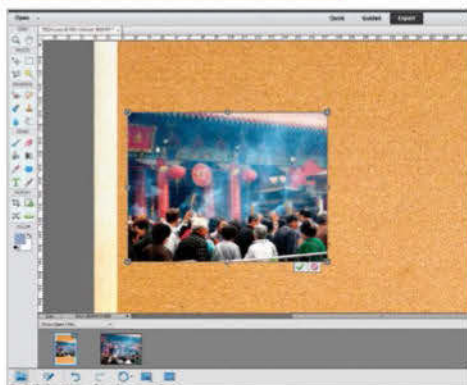
By using photos, souvenirs and your Photoshop skills, you can easily create a digital corkboard full of precious objects. Doing this digitally enables you to preserve the real items while still having them on display. It also allows you to add in other imagery that inspires.

The technique is surprisingly simple to do. Once you have the right formula, the options are endless. Simply cut out, add effects and place images on your board. In this tutorial we'll run through three ways for adding photos, objects and creating a display from scratch.

Each technique uses a basic pattern, so follow the steps carefully and you'll begin to notice similar techniques cropping up. By the end, you'll be a master of layers!

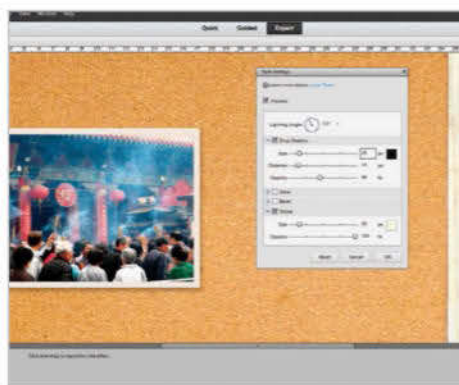
Have fun with this and don't restrict yourself to the examples in the tutorial. You can create a board full of holiday mementoes for your own wall that could make for a tribute to give to a friend or family member. This is the ideal way to start making a collage of your favourite images, so stay creative and make it yours!

Technique 1 Make it yours Create a basic composite using your own photos



Position your photo

01 Open 'Corkboard.psd' and your photos into Elements. Open the Photo Bin and drag a thumbnail onto the main corkboard image. Use Cmd/Ctrl+T to resize and position it on the board. Hit Enter, or click the tick icon, to apply changes.



Add a drop shadow

02 Click the FX icon at the bottom of the Layers panel. Select Stroke from the drop-down and double-click the first option. Click the Cog icon to access settings. Add a 30px White Stroke, tick Drop Shadow setting. Size: 29, Distance: 14 and Opacity to 44%.



Add some pins

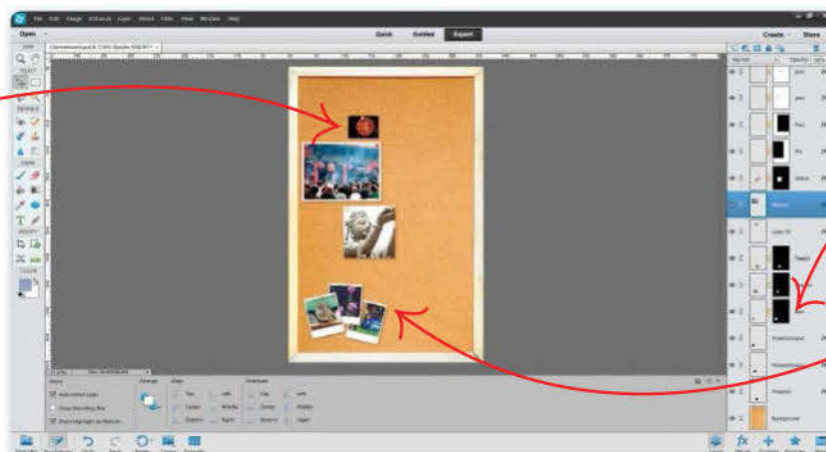
03 Open 'Push Pin.psd' and add it to the image. Use Cmd/Ctrl+T to resize and position it over a corner of the photo. Use Cmd/Ctrl+J to duplicate and position the second pin at the opposite corner. Repeat these steps with other photos.

DROP SHADOW

A drop shadow is a quick way to add realism to your corkboard, as if it were actually on the board.

AUTO-SELECT LAYERS

Having the Move tool (V) set to Auto-Select can be very useful when dealing with lots of different layers.



THE POLAROID EFFECT

Insert the Polaroid image from the supplied files and place your photos on top of it with a layer mask for a classic, vintage look.

TRANSFORM PHOTOS

Use Cmd/Ctrl+T to rotate and resize your photos to add variety into your composition.

Technique 2 Create new elements

Use simple tools to make objects from scratch

You don't just have to use photos; this section will run through a variety of different ways of adding new kinds of images into your project. There's quite a lot to take in with this section and each step

is jammed full of different ideas and techniques, so take your time and read each one carefully. Don't be afraid to play around, but most of all have fun!



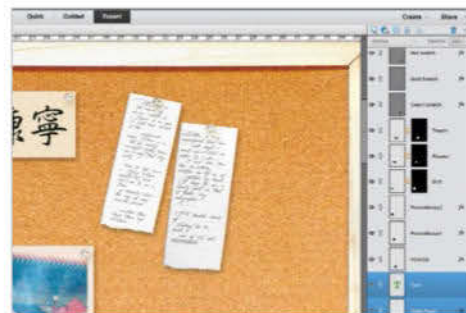
Insert object elements

01 Open up 'Chinese Characters.psd' or a photo of your choice into Elements. Using the Photo Bin add it onto the corkboard. Use Cmd/Ctrl+T to resize and position, hit Enter or click the tick icon to apply.



Create a new rectangle

02 Select the layer underneath the characters. Use the Shape tool (U) to draw a rectangle as a background with the colour set to off-white. With the rectangle active, select the FX menu. Add a drop shadow. Click the Cog icon and set Size to 29%, Distance to 14px and Opacity to 44%.



Add notes

03 Insert 'Lined Paper.psd' using the Photo Bin. Select the Type tool (T) and click inside the paper to add writing. Use a handwritten font for a nice effect. Rotate and resize both layers with Cmd/Ctrl+T. Add a drop shadow using the previous step as a guide.



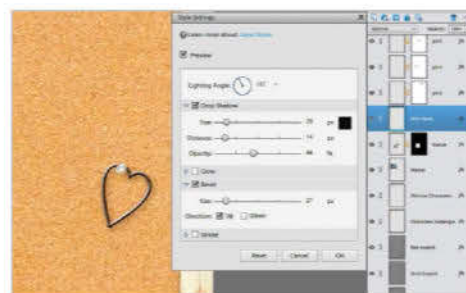
Create colour swatches

04 Use the Rectangle tool (U) to create some colour swatches. You can use the Eyedropper tool (I) to grab colours from your image, or pick one of the default colours. Add a drop shadow with the FX menu.



Draw in your elements

05 Have a go at drawing something with the Brush tool (B). Keep the Opacity low and pick a Chalk or Pastel brush. Have the Mode set to Multiply, as this will build up dark tones automatically for quicker shading.



Shapes and layer styles

06 Create a wire effect quickly using the hollow heart Custom Shape. Use Cmd/Ctrl+T to rotate. Open the FX menu, add the Drop Shadow, then select Bevel. Change the Direction to Up and the Size to 30px. Then add in a pin for it to hang on.

Simple compositing

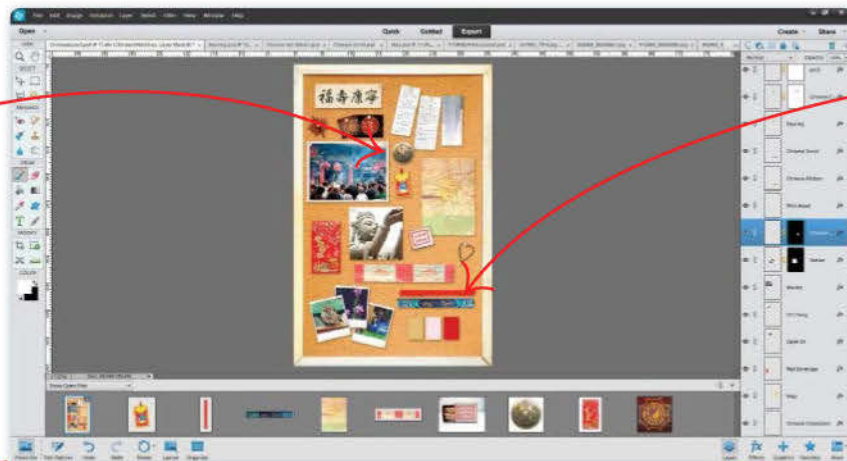
Ensure your display is as effective as it can be

VARY YOUR SHAPES

Adding objects can be much more interesting than lots of rectangles. Vary the shapes for a diverse look.

PHOTO BIN

Use the Photo Bin to keep track of all the new images you want to add.



USE PINS REALISTICALLY

Some of the additions wouldn't have visible pins so there's no need to add them.

ORDER LAYERS

Don't forget that you can overlap elements for extra realism by positioning them over each other and also adjusting layer order.

Technique 3

Edit with real objects

Seamlessly integrate objects into your corkboard

To keep the whole composition interesting, we need more than just flat rectangles. Scanning in photos, or found objects of different shapes and sizes, can add a whole new dimension to the corkboard. There are many example objects included with the supplied files, but this is all about creating a unique corkboard of your own filled with the things that matter to you.



Prepare to add objects

01 Open up all the objects you want to add to the corkboard; some images are included with your resources for you to get started. Some images used here have been found on stock websites; it's great way to enhance a presentation.



Add and position

02 Drag in your first new object and position it using Cmd/Ctrl+T. Add a drop shadow via the FX menu using the previous settings. Then add a pin by duplicating it (Cmd/Ctrl+J) from a previous layer and repositioning it accordingly.



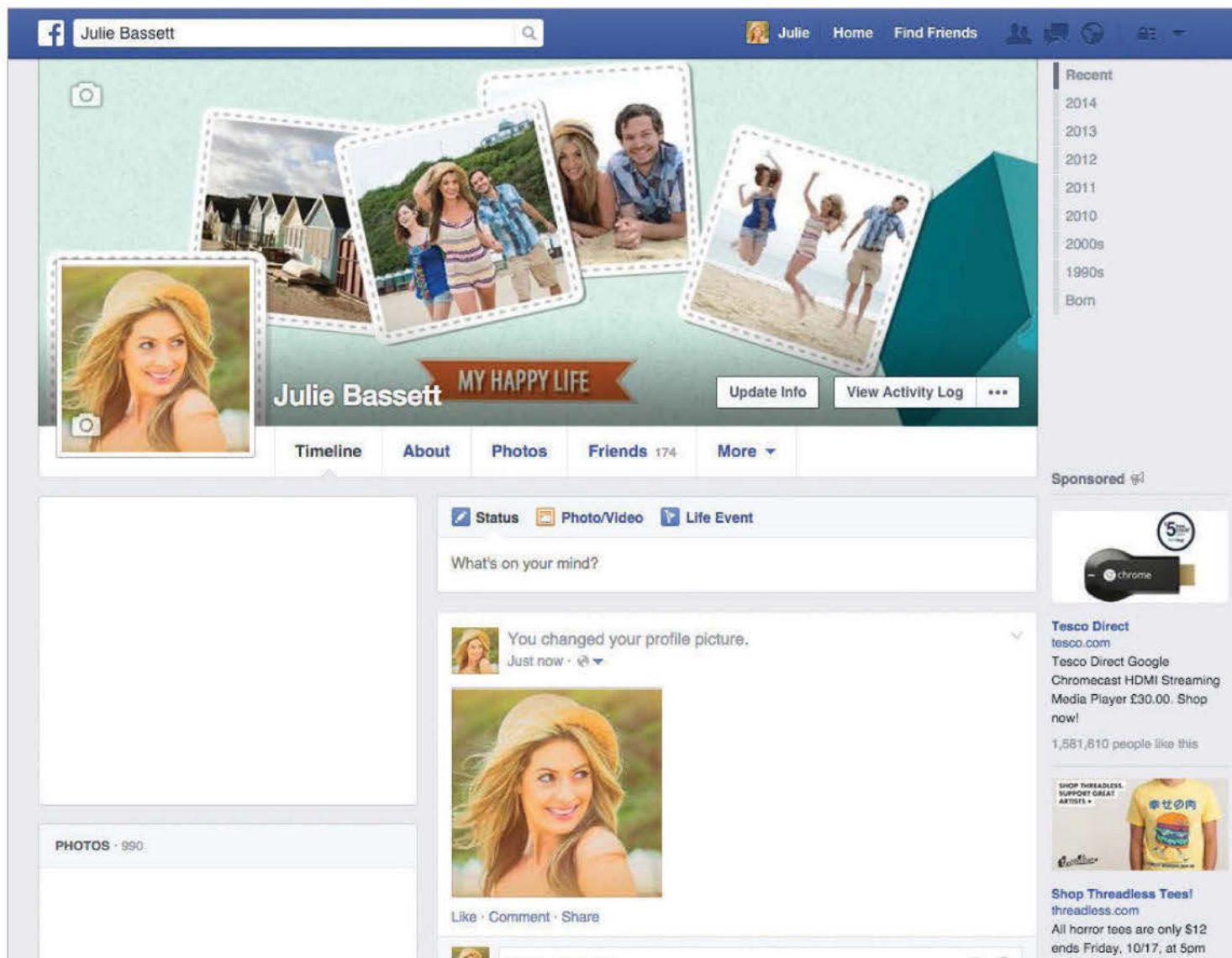
Using layer masks

03 Use the same techniques to add the rest of your objects. Many will actually need to be cut out before they look right for your image. To do this, add a layer mask to the image's layer and use brushes to hide parts of the image.



Cut out objects

04 Use a black brush to paint on the layer mask over the areas to hide. If you make a mistake, switch to white and draw back areas. Use these steps to keep adding objects until you've made the full composition. Don't forget to add shadows and pins!



Build exciting Facebook cover photos

The latest version of Photoshop Elements can quickly make your social site stand out

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

Most of us have a Facebook profile, and we just pick our favourite snaps as our cover image and profile pictures, and then forget about them for ages. This means that most profiles are somewhat unmemorable and many look similar. However, there are clever folks out there who have created some amazing cover photos in Facebook, which incorporate their profile picture so that they work together harmoniously. If you have any version of Photoshop and the time to sit down and build a pixel-perfect template, then you can create your own creative profile headers. However, with the release

of Photoshop Elements 13, this process has now got much easier. Designing a Facebook Cover has been added as a new photo project, to the Create menu in the Editor. This loads the templates for you with lots of themes to choose from, and all you have to do is select your image(s), position them correctly, and upload them to Facebook.

In Basic mode, you can create simple but effective designs in minutes that really make the most of your pictures. Choose the Advanced mode and you can use the full power of Elements to come up with your own creations.

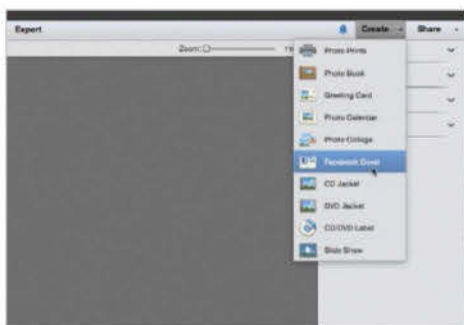
RESIZE

The photo may not fit initially, so use the different sliders to rotate and scale it bigger or smaller.



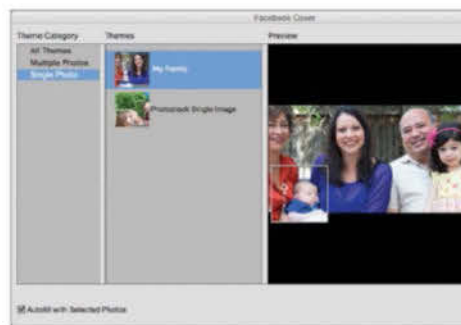
Technique 1 Use a single image

Use Elements' built-in photo project for Facebook



Create the project

01 Open Photoshop Elements 13, go to the Create menu on the right-hand side and click the down-facing arrow to bring up a menu. Select Facebook Cover from the photo project options. This is a new option in version 13.



Pick a theme

02 There are a range of themes to choose from. We will pick a Single Photo theme for this tutorial, so choose this from the left-hand options. There are only two different designs here – we have gone for 'My Family'. Click OK.



Change the main image

03 The design will now open in Elements. Click on the sample image and you will see an Open dialog box which enables you to select your own family picture. Finding one to fit the format is the trickiest part of the process so take your time.



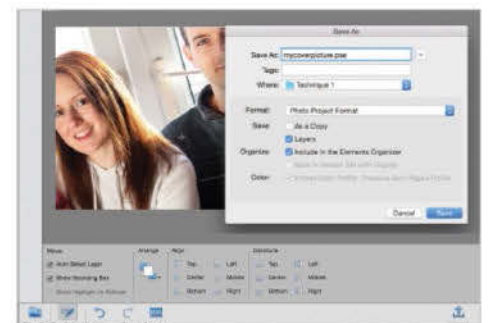
Edit the image

04 Your image will be imported into the space, but it won't necessarily be in the right place. Click on the photo to bring up the image options in the top left of the image. You can use the slider to scale the image bigger or smaller.



More tweaks

05 The first icon by the slider lets you rotate your image by 90-degrees. You can rotate more accurately using the Angle wheel in the bottom Tool Options window. You can move the photo around with the mouse to get it perfectly placed.

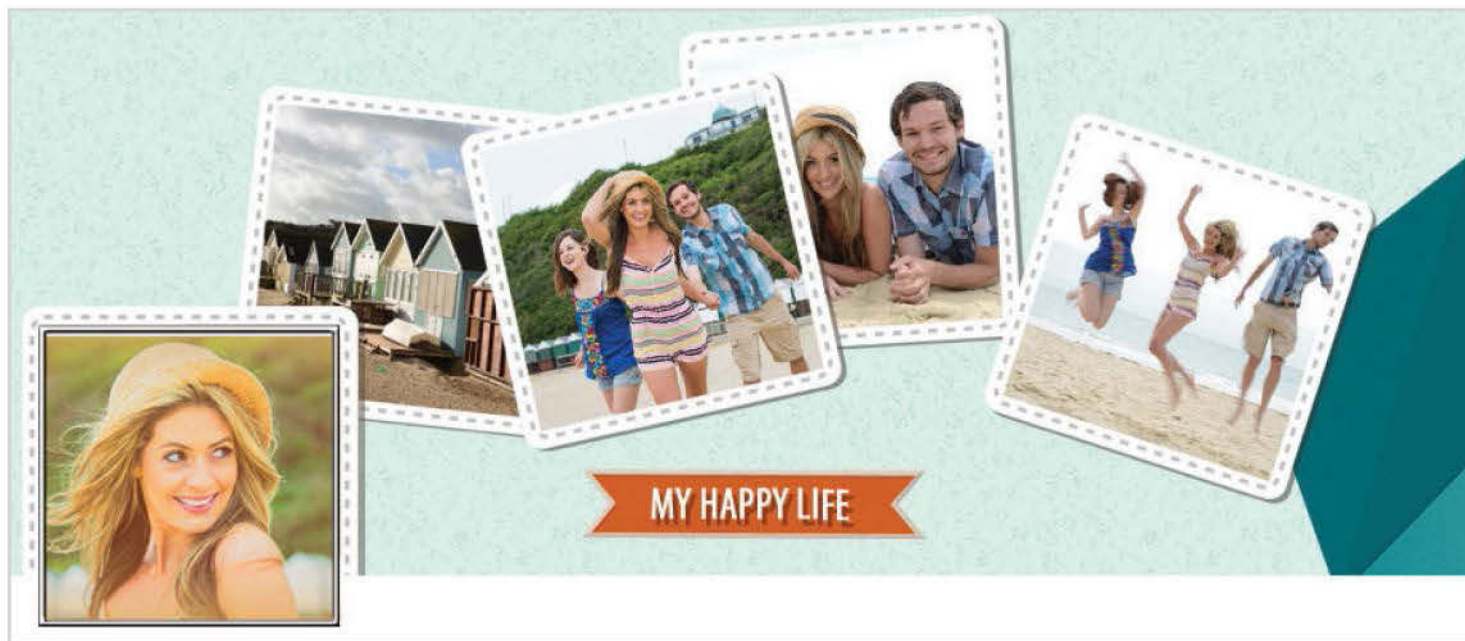


Finish and save

06 The graphic on the image can also be moved by double-clicking on it to select it. When you're happy with your layout, click Save. You can only save as a PDF or a PSE (Elements Photo Project) – pick this to be able to re-edit it.

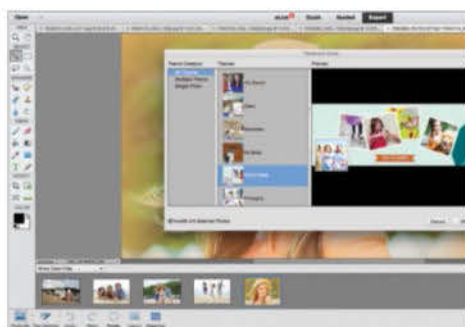
Technique 2 Make a scrapbook-style cover photo

Use multiple images to make an attractive header for Facebook



Pick your images

01 Now we are going to design a cover picture using multiple images. Collect together a selection of images of yourself, your friends and your family that you want to showcase on your profile and open each of them up in Elements.



Use Autofill

02 Now, go to the Create menu. Choose one of the Multiple Photos templates; there are a range of these to pick from, so have a look through them to see which works best. Make sure that the 'Autofill With Selected Photos' option is selected.



Edit your design

03 When you click OK, your design will be loaded with your open images already placed. You can double-click on any one to edit it. If you need to move them around, you can open the Photo Bin in the bottom left and drag in the image that you want.



Add extra graphics

04 In the bottom right of the window, click on Graphics to see the different graphical elements used in your image and other graphics related to the theme (these are limited in Basic mode). Drag in any elements that you want to use.



Edit the text

05 Use the Text tool – selected from the tool list on the left-hand side – to edit the text on the template to anything you like. Double-click on the existing text to edit it. You may also need to double-click on the graphic behind the text and scale to suit.



Advanced mode

06 In Advanced mode, you can access the full range of graphics in Elements to customise your design. You can also access all of the Layers and Elements' tools. However, you are still working within a Photo Project, so you can only save as a PSE or PDF.

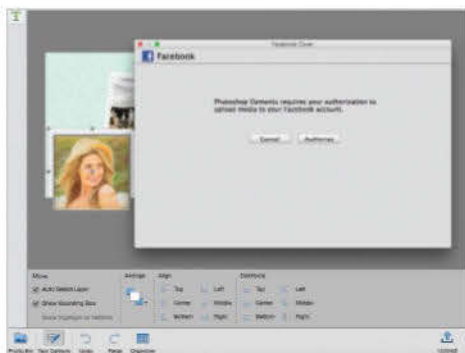
Technique 3

Upload your creations

Now you can add your new cover images to Facebook

What does it mean?

PSE FILE A PSE – An Elements file format for photo projects. The files can only be opened in Elements and edited using the tools. The PSE file is actually a folder, so you can open it (Cmd/Ctrl+right-click>Open Package Contents) and see layered PSDs for each page, which are automatically generated.



Authorise your account

01 When you choose Upload for the first time, you will need to authorise Photoshop Elements to use your Facebook account. You will be led through a series of screens to agree to, both in Elements and online in Facebook.



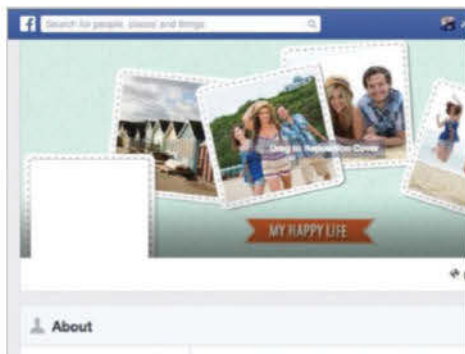
Start the upload

02 When you are connected, you will see this screen, which shows you the images that will be added to your Facebook account in a folder called 'Photoshop Elements'. You can opt to upload the cover image, the profile image or both.



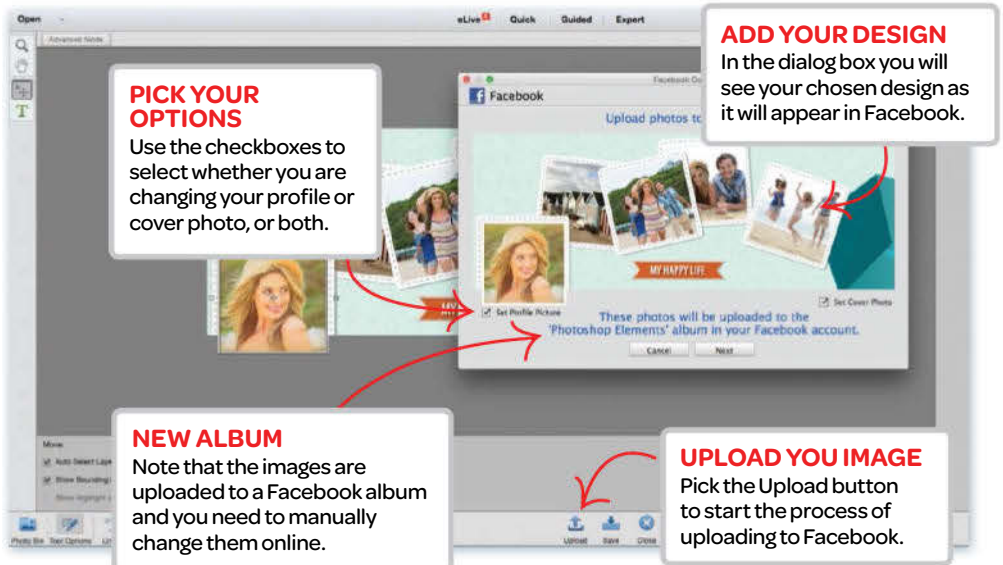
Switch to Facebook

03 When the images are uploaded, you will see this page. This has a how-to video in case you don't know how to change your cover or profile image. When you are happy, tick 'I know what to do on Facebook' and you can continue.



In Facebook

04 Now in Facebook, change your cover image and profile image as usual. Select the option to pick from your photos, choose the new Photoshop Elements album, and upload your designs from there.





Source file available

Learn this technique
using the supplied files

Design a Kindle book cover

Use Elements to create Kindle covers worth judging the book by

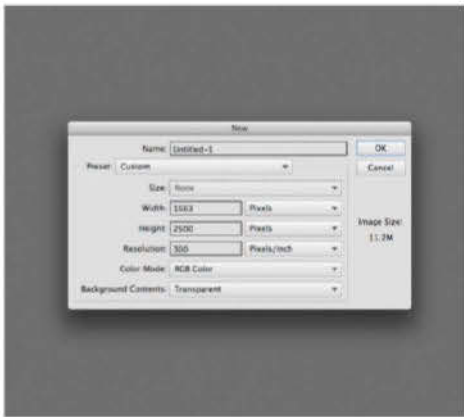
Thanks to the internet, it's never been easier to share your creativity with the world, whether you're a musician giving away songs, a comedian uploading videos, or even a writer who wants to sell your books. But how do you make yourself exciting enough to stand out from the crowd?

Creating a striking cover for your Kindle eBook is one of the easiest ways to give your work identity and intrigue. It might seem like a task for a professional artist or designer, but it's easy to create

in Photoshop Elements, as long as you know what you want to draw attention to, and what kind of feel you want to go for.

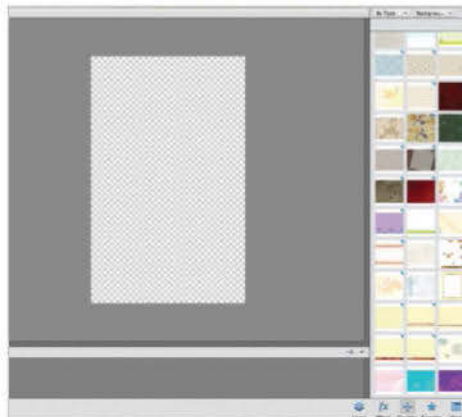
You might want to sketch out ideas for your book cover to start with; maybe select pictures of subjects that look like the characters in the story, or even photograph the settings described. It's important to capture the feel of the book perfectly on the cover; check out how to do that in this three-part process, from creation to upload, and help your book fly off the virtual shelves.

Technique 1 Cover conventions Build the foundations and insert an image



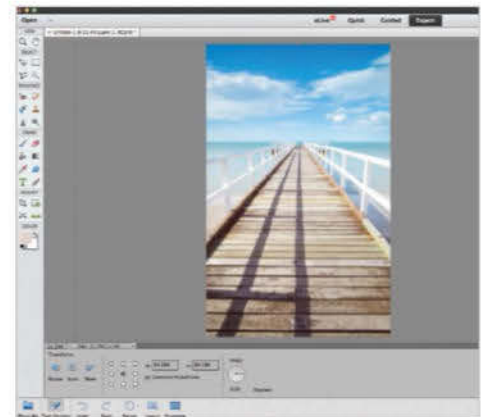
Create new document

01 Start off by opening Elements and going to File>New>Blank File. From the drop-down menu, select Custom and enter the width of your new document as 1563 and the height of 2500. This is the standard size for Kindle book covers.



Insert graphics

02 Elements comes with countless great backgrounds, textures and pictures to use in your work, many of which make great book covers, as they're plain yet eye-catching images on which you can place text. Choose one you like and double-click.



Insert your own image

03 If you fancy being more expressive, find your own image and paste it into your picture. Landscapes and still-life shots work well. Often with novels, you'll find that the picture on the cover is a setting, rather than a character.

PLAIN TEXTURES

There are loads of plain textures to choose from, including Beige Diamonds and Animal Fur Pink, that make great backdrops to add exciting pictures to.

MORE TEXTURES

More intricate textures, such as the Autumn set, make for great book covers that are both minimal and classy on their own.



IMAGES

There are plenty of images to drop onto your book cover in Elements too, including Airplane and Baseball Field, that could save you hours searching for the perfect picture.

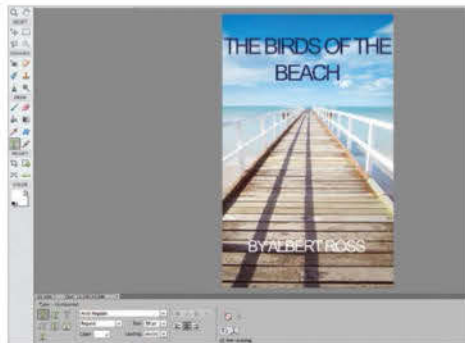
Technique 2 Add the text and more

Give your picture a bookish feel, and make titles pop

Now that you've applied an eye-catching picture, it's time to add everything you associate with a book, from the title to optional straps. You can deviate as much from this template as you like. You might not want straps, or you might want your title in the centre of the book. Again, experiment as much as you want.

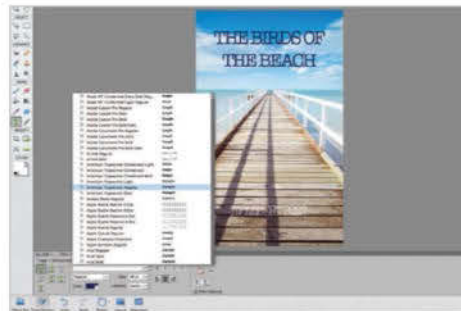
What does it mean?

CLIPPING MASK – These clip the pixels on their layer to the pixels of the layer below, and only that layer. They're perfect for adding patterns, colours or pictures to layers such as text, as they only display what you want them to display. It's a simple way to add a bit of colour or texture back into lifeless text.



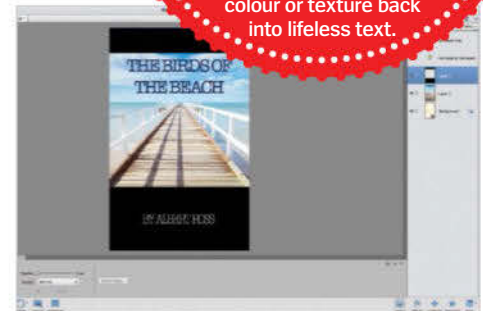
Insert text

01 Now we're going to give the cover its identity. Go to the Text icon and drag a text box to create. You don't have to use the word 'by', but make sure the title is at the top of the cover, and the author at the bottom.



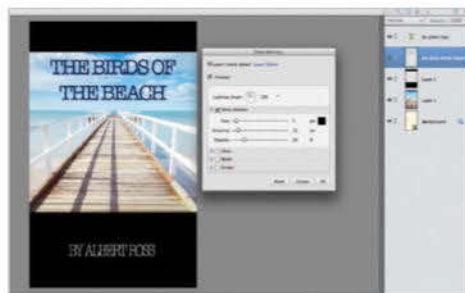
Choose your font carefully

02 Now to decide which font is right for you. We've gone for a typewriter serif to suggest that this is crime fiction, but quirky fonts might imply a funny read, and big, bold sans-serifs are used in non-fiction. Play around with which style suits your cover.



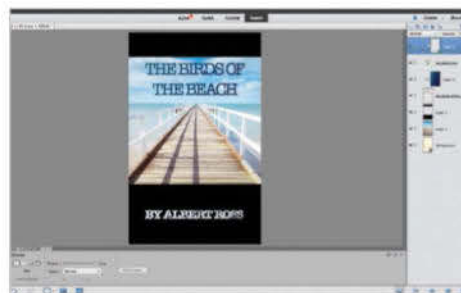
Add a strap

03 Many novel covers include straps, usually black. You don't have to add these, but your picture will look more bookish for it. Insert a new layer over the background, select the space for the straps, and press Alt/Opt+backspace to fill with Foreground colour.



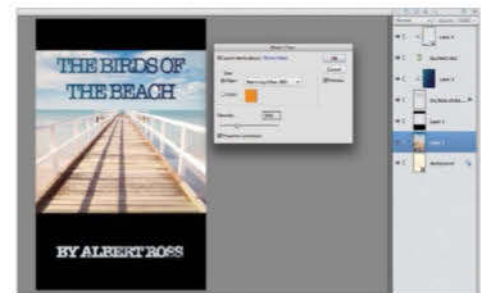
Add layer styles

04 Head to Layer>Layer Style>Style Settings to add a shadow, a glow or a bevel to your title to make it stand out from the background. We've gone for Drop Shadow with the settings Size: 5, Distance: 12 and Opacity: 20.



Add patterns to text

05 Insert a layer above your text layers and create gradients or pictures, then Ctrl/right-click on the layer and click Create Clipping Mask to apply. If you want to add a pattern to your text, make sure the font is thick or bold enough to show this texture.



Make adjustments

06 Finish off by giving your main image just a slight filter. Head to Filter>Adjustments>Photo Filter and choose a Warm Filter at 30%; this is a clever effect to use, as it will give a slight sepia tone, typically associated with old books.

Make it eye-catching

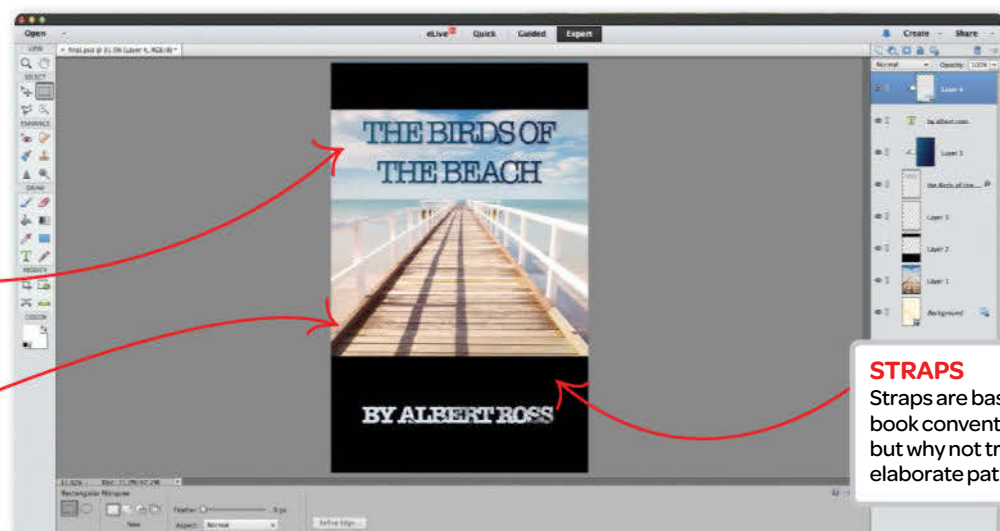
Ensure you get all of the elements right

TEXT

Make sure the typeface fits the genre of the book.

MAIN IMAGE

The main image is the first thing that will catch the eye of possible readers.



STRAPS

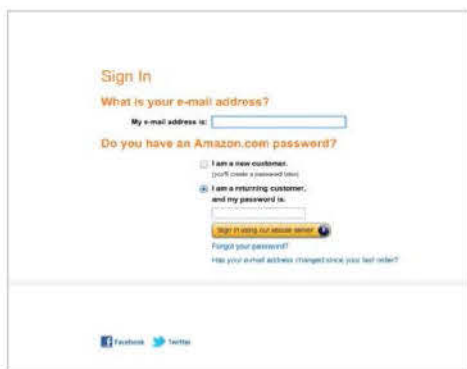
Straps are basic book conventions, but why not try more elaborate patterns?

Technique 3

Add your cover to the book

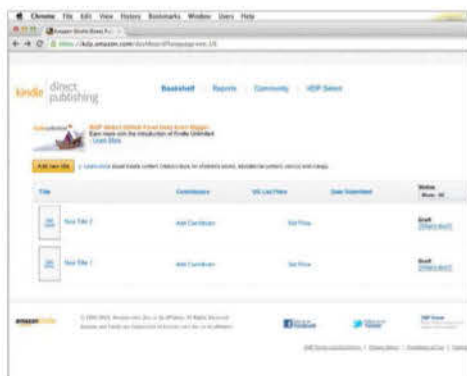
Insert your artwork into the rest of your book project and upload

The book cover is probably the finishing touch to completing the novel that you've put many hours into writing. So, now that you've completed the cover, you're ready to upload it all to the Kindle store, fill in important details about the book itself, and start selling some copies. This process can be a bit daunting, so let's check out exactly how to do it.



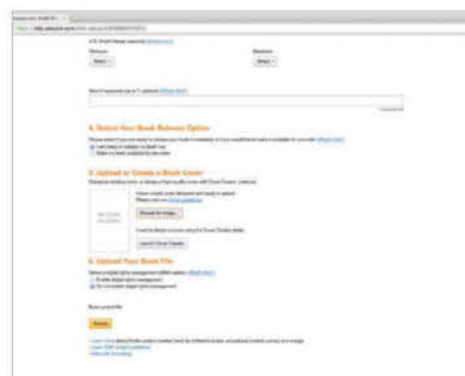
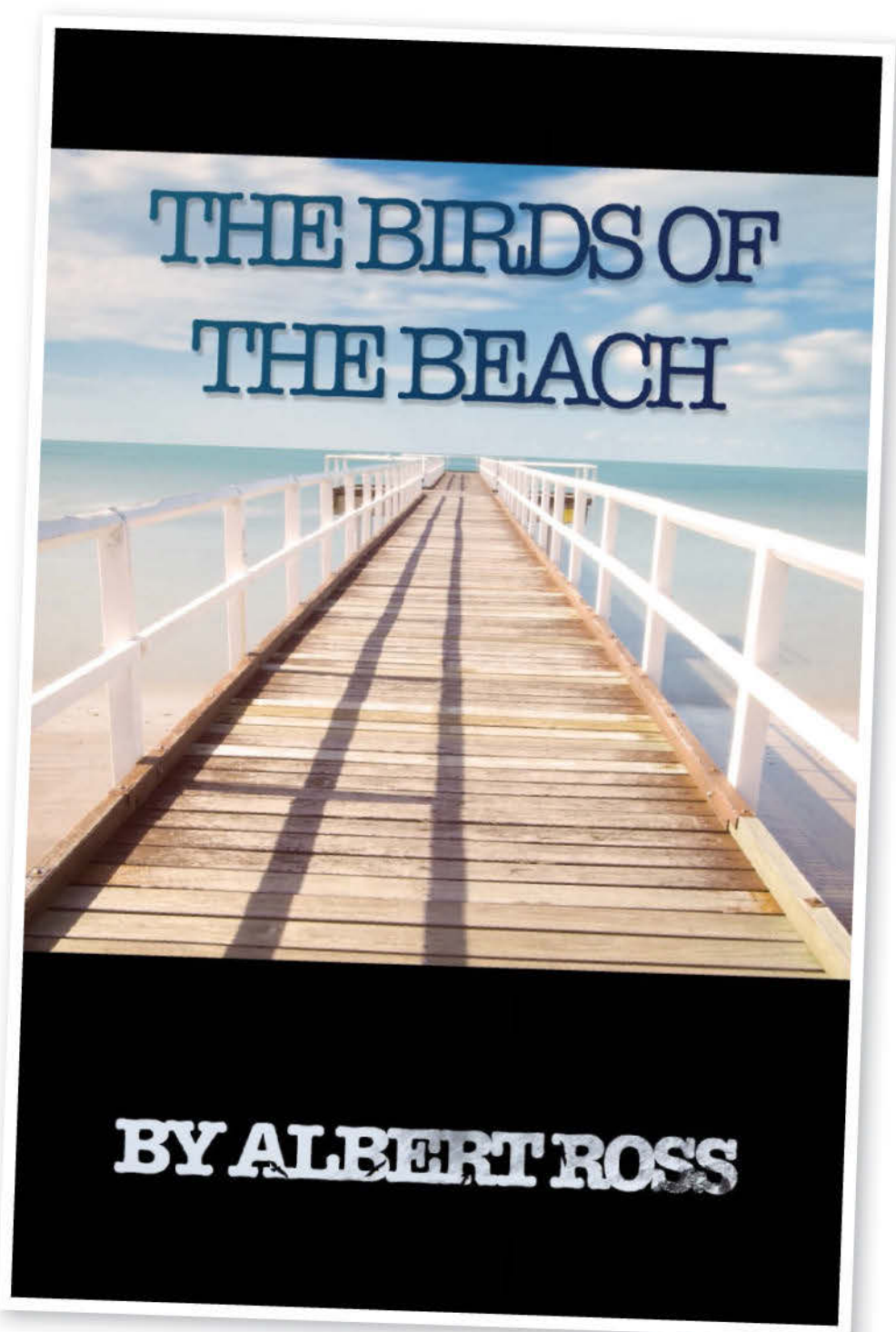
Log in to Amazon

01 While this is a great tutorial to create fake book covers – maybe you want to scatter a few in a composition – you can also use your book cover on a real Kindle book. Go to <http://kdp.amazon.com/> and sign up for a free Amazon account if you don't already possess one.



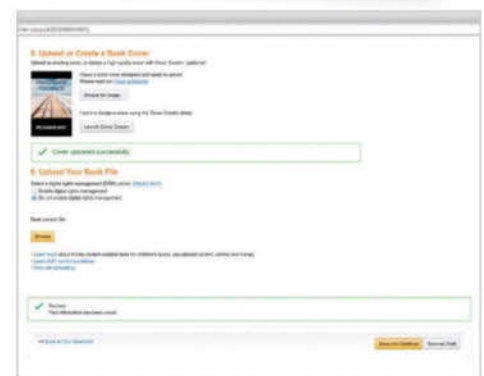
Add a new title

02 On your bookshelf, you'll see any books you have already created; Amazon creates a standard image for books without covers. To add a new title, click the yellow button, or click on a title to edit that book, and add a cover for it.



Upload

03 Fill in all the details of your book, including the title, contributors and a short description. Scroll down, and towards the bottom you'll see there's a button to upload your work. Save the cover you've just been working on as a .jpg and upload it here.



Save and continue

04 Wait for the file to process, which might take a while depending on how big the picture is. Now all you need to do is upload your book file, and you can save and continue, ready to sell your book on the Amazon store.



Photo projects

JAGGED EDGES

Cutting out edges with the Polygonal Lasso gives the effect of the pictures being hand-cut.

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

Create a Tumblr collage

Have fun re-living memories and transforming your pictures into a quirky collage using the power of Elements

There are so many creative and exciting ways to collate pictures of you and your friends, but one of the most fun options out there has to be a Tumblr collage. You can get creative with styles, colours and picture positioning, but actually precision isn't key with this particular project, so it is perfect for some no-stress editing.

Anyone starting out with Photoshop or Elements could learn a lot from creating rough collages. Such a process covers all the necessary aspects of how to layer a composition, but you don't have to be an expert in selecting or refining edges to make it look great. A

Tumblr collage is more about the pictures you've taken and the positioning and ordering of your pictures, than it is about neatness. This means that every one is unique, and you can tailor the look of your picture according to the images you have.

Another great thing about the process is that Tumblr collages make fantastic printouts. So this is a tutorial that you can use to create gifts or greetings cards for friends, or just a simple collage for you to share on your blog. Check out our three techniques, and then gather your images to create your own!

Technique 1

Make the classic collage

Use lassos and gradients to create the typical collage effect

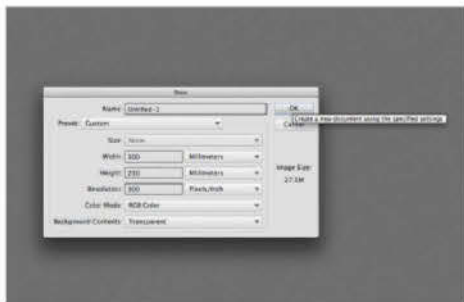
The recognisable Tumblr collage is easier to create than it looks. It's the simplest of compositions, and it's really a digital equivalent of cutting up pictures from old magazines to create one big picture.

Just remember to experiment with gradients, layer order and blend modes with your layers to create something individual.



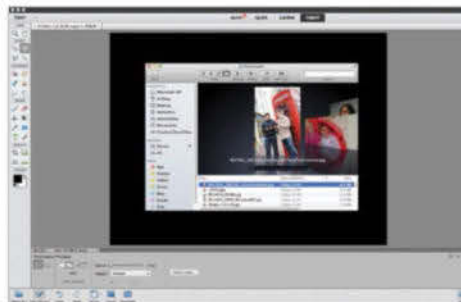
POSITIONING

Move pictures that are towards the bottom of the collage to the top of the layer stack to show them clearly.



Create your document

01 Start by opening Elements and creating a new document. You're going to need to make it big enough to include all your pictures in, so we've gone for 300mm x 200mm. Bear in mind the size of it if you want to print it out. Fill the background black.



Source some pictures

02 Find a collection of pictures that you want to use. Many Tumblr collages focus on a celebrity, but you might want to create a collage of your friends, even a specific place or landmark. Keep your pictures in one folder, ready to drop in.



Add colour effects

03 Drop your first picture in. Add a retro effect by creating a new layer and adding a gradient; we've gone for orange to pink. Set layer to Soft Light and add a Lighten layer, filled with dark purple. Set these layers as clipping masks by Ctrl/right-clicking them.



Cut out and move

04 Once you've added filters, merge your layers. Then, using the Polygonal Lasso, cut out your subjects from the photo, click the mask button and then position in the picture. Don't worry about neatness, as this adds to the quirky finish later on.



Add more pictures

05 Repeat and begin building up your picture. Add various gradients as filters and experiment; place your subjects all over the picture, and re-order layers to give some images more prominence. Check out the FileSilo for 200 gradients to play with.



Finish off the image

06 Build up your picture so that no black space can be seen. Reposition and reorder layers if need be, and finish off with a couple of final gradients. Remember to keep filter Opacity between 20 and 50% and use Soft Light and Screen for best results.

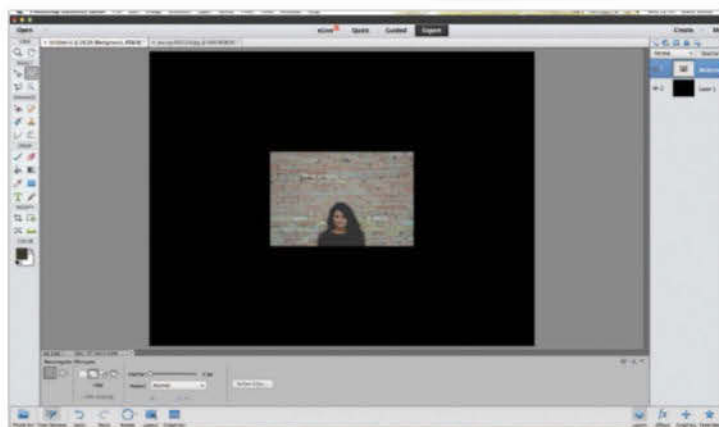
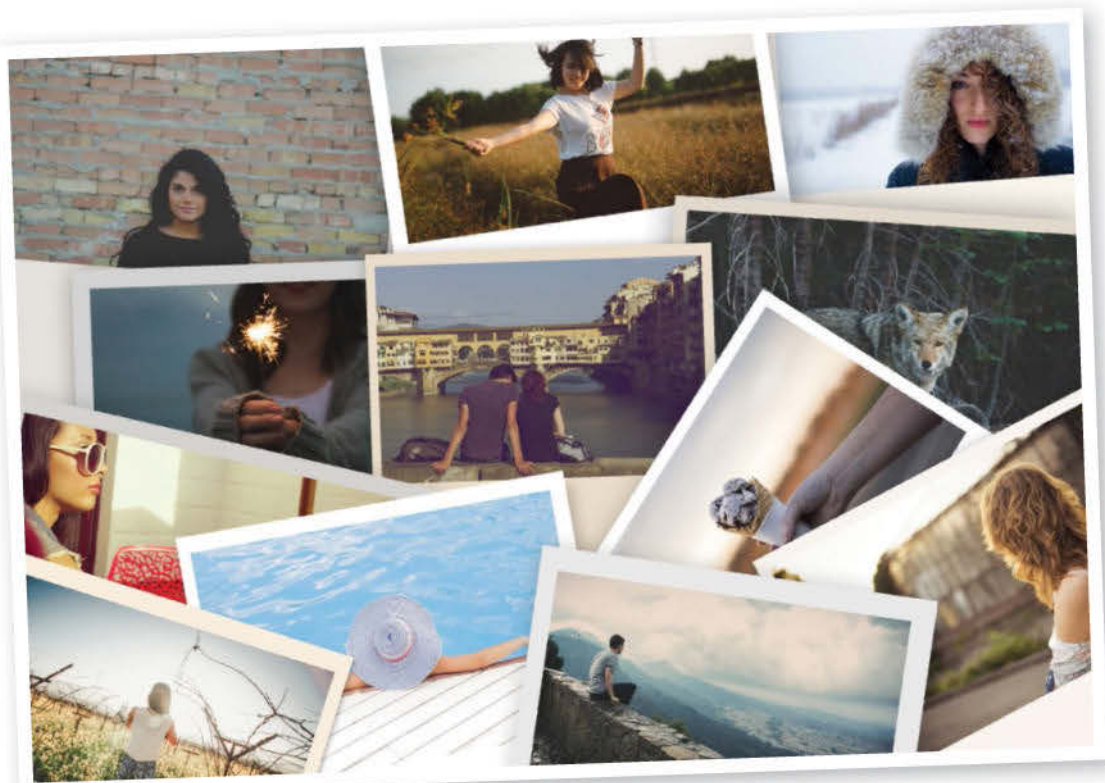
Technique 2

Try the Polaroid style

Give a retro camera effect to your pictures

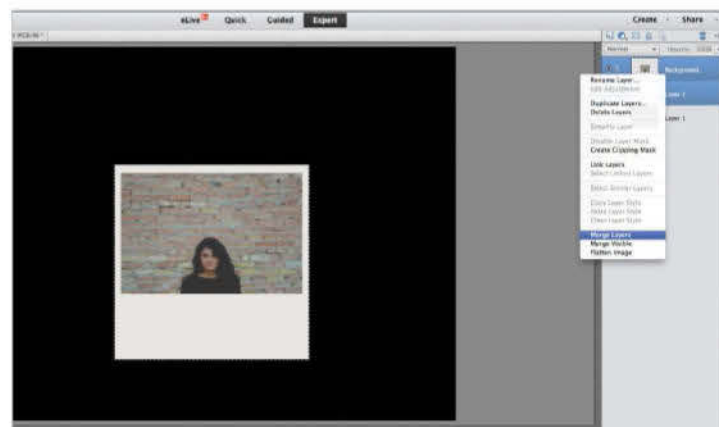
The freeness afforded by the classic Tumblr collage can be fun to play around with, but perhaps you're after something that's a little less messy.

If that is the case, the Polaroid effect is just as easy to master, but it gives a classy, vintage feel to your collage. Best of all, you don't have to be particularly precise with this tutorial either.



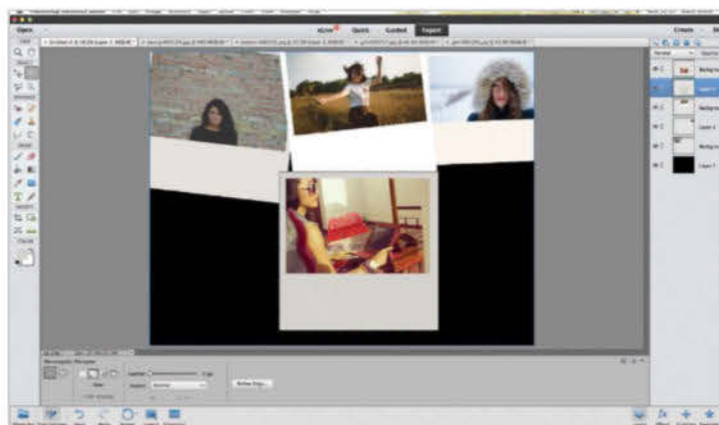
Insert your first picture

01 Create a new document as you did in the previous collage. Drag your first picture into the document and resize to make it smaller; add filters if you like. Create a new layer behind this picture and select a square using the Shift key to retain the exact ratio.



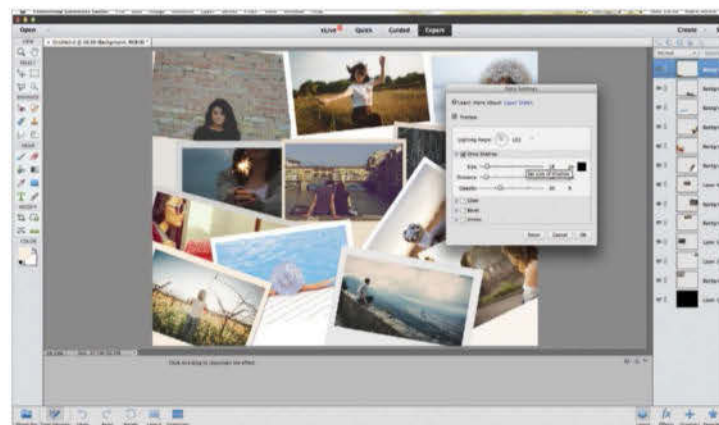
Create your Polaroid

02 With your square selected, choose a white/beige colour from the colour swatches and press Alt/Opt-Backspace to fill it with colour. Move the square to create what looks like a Polaroid, like we have, and merge these two layers.



Build up the picture

03 Repeat this process for all the pictures for the collage. We've chosen to vary Polaroid size and colour, and not to add filters, but it's up to you; you might want to create more colourful Polaroids. Ctrl/right-click and Free Transform to position, resize and rotate.



Add shadows

04 Cover the black space with Polaroids that you've created and then head to Layer>Layer Style and add a Drop Shadow. Set the Size to 18px, the Distance to 10px and the Opacity to 30%. This will add a depth to the collage and finish it off nicely.

Technique 3

Add extra elements

Embellish your collage with shapes, text and all sorts

If you think you can fit any more space into your finished piece, custom shapes and text can be cool extras to potentially consider. In fact, it's really easy to add some flourishes to a collage, and these are embellishments that you can save separately and add into any collage you like.



Add shapes

01 Go to the Custom Shapes icon along the left-hand side of Elements. You can add all kinds of shapes, but we're going for hearts. Create a new layer for each one if you want to vary colour.



Insert text

02 Text is another great final touch that you can give to a collage. A lot of Tumblr collages use handwritten fonts, but any typeface can look great; write words relating to the pictures, and use striking fonts to grab attention.



Inject some style

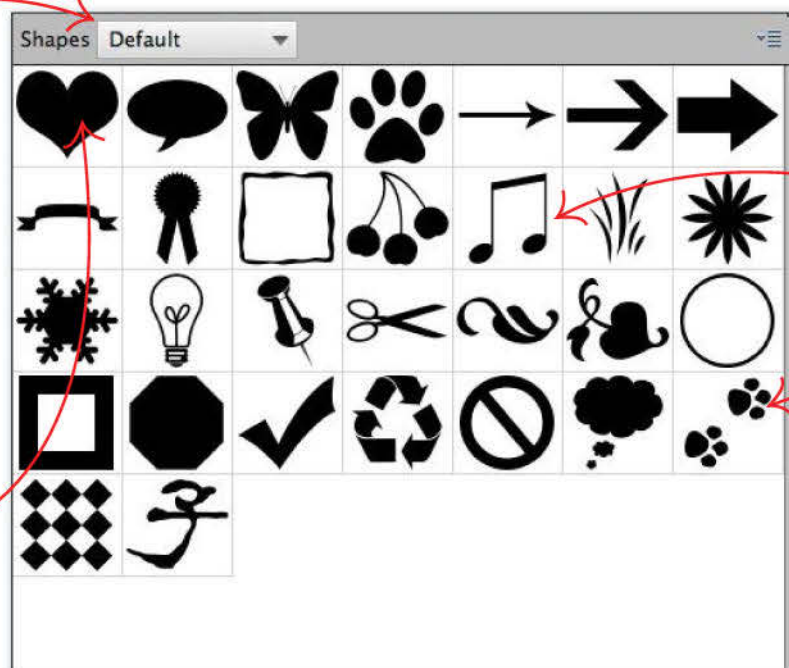
03 Head to Layer>Layer Style. Here, you can add drop shadows to your text and colourful outer glows to your shapes; experiment with what effects look good before positioning the embellishments over the collage.

MORE SHAPES

Discover even more in this drop-down menu; there's everything from flowers to fruit and even talk bubbles.

HEARTS

Hearts are a staple of Tumblr collages, and a great addition if it's a collection of friends or loved ones.



MUSICAL NOTES

Musical notes are another symbol that look great, and there are a few options to choose from in the Shapes menu.

PAWS

If you're creating a pet collage, the paw print options are a must-use, and there are even more animal shapes available to use.

Apply a jigsaw effect

Use Photoshop and Elements to turn your pictures into puzzles

Jigsaws are simple pastimes that rely on problem-solving skills, and the payoff in completing one is getting to see the finished picture in front of you. It's similar to Photoshop: you build a picture for fun, and are rewarded by seeing the hard work you invested in your final piece.

It's even more of a payoff if you choose the picture that goes on the jigsaw. You might want to create a composition specifically to rebuild in jigsaw form; perhaps you want to create surreal or abstract artwork for the puzzle; or maybe you want to touch up a family photo before putting the jigsaw effect over the top.

You don't need to even turn your picture into a real jigsaw. You might want to overlay the effect over your picture for a novelty photo effect. Jigsaws are meant to be fun for all ages, so experiment with ideas, pictures and shapes, and see where your imagination can take you when you create one. To help you on your way, we provide all the instruction you need over these pages.

EXTRACT WISELY

Don't extract puzzle pieces from your jigsaw that have subjects or big objects over them; this will ruin the image.



Technique 1

Elements Puzzle creator

Use the Elements option in Guide to build a puzzle

Elements lets you add all kinds of filters and edits to your work, including this. The best thing about this option is that it does the bulk of the work for you, but it still looks great. The final options of removing puzzle pieces and scattering them are optional, too.



The effect

01 Open up your picture in Elements, go to Guided and choose Photo Play>Puzzle Effect. Choose a size for your puzzle pieces – small, medium and large – and use the preview to help decide which is best.



Select pieces and extract

02 Click on the Select Puzzle Piece option. Use the Magic Wand provided to click on a shape, and then click Extract Piece; this will cut it to a new layer for you to place over your final puzzle in a minute.

Apply a jigsaw effect

Source file available

Learn this technique using the supplied files

SIZES

Choose from three sizes for the pieces, depending on which looks best for your jigsaw. Small is often the most realistic option.

SELECT PUZZLE PIECE

Use the Magic Wand to select your puzzle pieces. This works best on pieces with a solid colour to them.

1. Click on one of the buttons below to give your image a Puzzle Effect.



2. Enhance the effect by extracting a puzzle piece.

2a. Click the Select Puzzle Piece button, and then click on the center of any puzzle piece.

Select Puzzle Piece

2b. Click on the Extract Piece button to extract your selected puzzle piece.

Extract Piece

3. Use the Move tool to arrange the extracted piece.

Move Tool

4. [Optional] If you extracted two contiguous pieces from the puzzle, use the Eraser tool to erase the boundary line between them.

Eraser Tool

EXTRACT & MOVE

The Extract and Move tools can be used to take pieces from one and mix them up in the puzzle.

ERASE

Erase the outlines of your puzzle with the Erase tool, in order to create the idea that the image is made of real pieces.



Move pieces

03 Select the pieces that you've just cut from the picture, and using the handles on the corners of them, rotate before placing back in the empty corner at angles over your half-completed jigsaw.



Erase

04 Finally, use the Eraser tool to get rid of the outlines between the jigsaw pieces. This will tidy up the composition and give the illusion of the jigsaw being scattered over the puzzle.

Technique 2

Use Elements Shapes

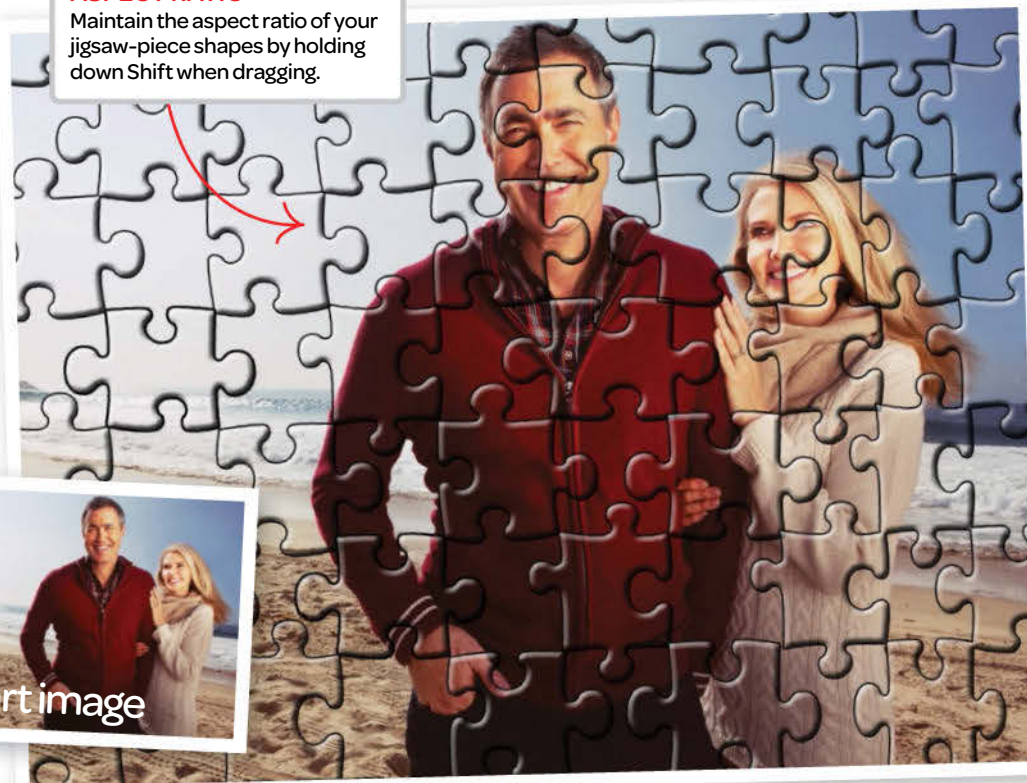
Drag puzzle pieces into your chosen artwork to add them to your puzzle

Elements offers all kinds of shapes, and it's easy to overlook them as novelty effects for your pictures. But getting imaginative with them is easy, if you know how to use Layer Styles and blend modes.

The great thing about using shapes is that you have a degree of control over which pieces go where, but it's still a simple way to create a cool-looking puzzle.



ASPECT RATIO
Maintain the aspect ratio of your jigsaw-piece shapes by holding down Shift when dragging.



Find your shape

01 Go to the Shape icon on the left-hand menu, and select a puzzle piece; there are four to choose from and you can use each of them to create the full effect of a jigsaw. Simply drag to create a shape on your work.



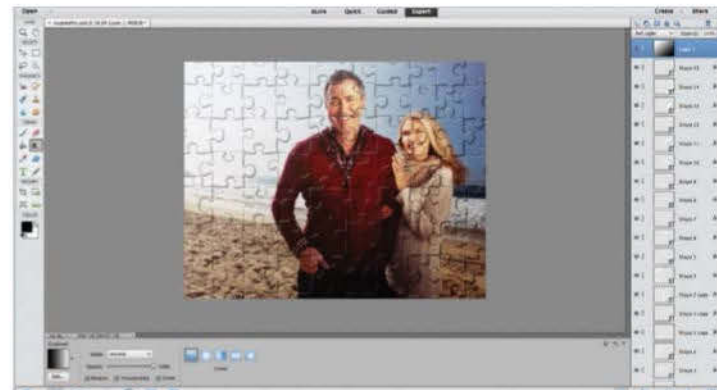
Create more

03 Drag more jigsaw pieces into the picture, lining up the corners of the shapes to create the effect that this picture is made from these pieces. Go to Layer Styles again, and head down to Bevel if you want to give the effect of these pieces having more tone.



Add a shadow

02 Head to Layer>Layer Styles>Style Settings. Here, you'll be able to add a drop shadow to your shape; this will enable us to see it alongside all the other shapes in the jigsaw. Choose Size: 5, Distance: 0 and Opacity: 100%. Change blend mode to Color Dodge.



Finish off

04 Keep duplicating your jigsaw puzzle pieces until your canvas is completely covered in these shapes. You might want to select all of them and reduce the opacity, or just add a new layer with a Black to White gradient, 20% Opacity and Soft Light, to finish off the piece.

Technique 3

Sculpt with the Pen

Draw your own puzzle pieces and duplicate to create

In Photoshop, the Pen tool is the cornerstone of all kinds of creative projects. It's a tool for illustrators and artists who want to get as creative as they can – so why not use it to create your own jigsaw-puzzle pieces?

The beauty of this technique is that the pieces are completely customisable to match whatever your project is. So get drawing and see just how creative you can be!



TESSELLATING SIDES

If you draw one or two sides of a puzzle that are the same length, duplicating that layer will be enough for the entire puzzle to fit together.



Start drawing

01 Activate your grid by hitting Cmd/Ctrl+**'**, and select the Pen tool (P). Create a new layer and using the bigger squares, draw along with the Pen to create the shape of one side of a jigsaw puzzle piece.



Stroke the path

02 Select the Brush tool. Choose a Radius of anywhere between 5 and 20 pixels, depending on how thick you want your puzzle pieces, and then click the Paths tab. Ctrl/right-click your path and hit Stroke Path.



Duplicate and move

03 Duplicate your layer and hit Cmd/Ctrl+**T** to transform your jigsaw side. Rotate it 90 degrees, and place it perpendicular to the end of the original side; do this again until you have a complete jigsaw piece.



Continue duplicating

04 Carry on duplicating your jigsaw piece edges – many at a time if it's easier – to build up the shape of your puzzle. Remember to turn your pieces both inwards and outwards to vary up the style. Continue to use the grid as a guide to snap your puzzle to.



Merge all

05 Once you have a jigsaw puzzle over the image, select all the puzzle outline layers, Ctrl/right-click and hit Merge Layers. Duplicate your original picture, move it to the top of the stack, press Ctrl/Cmd and the outlines' layer preview, before hitting Mask.

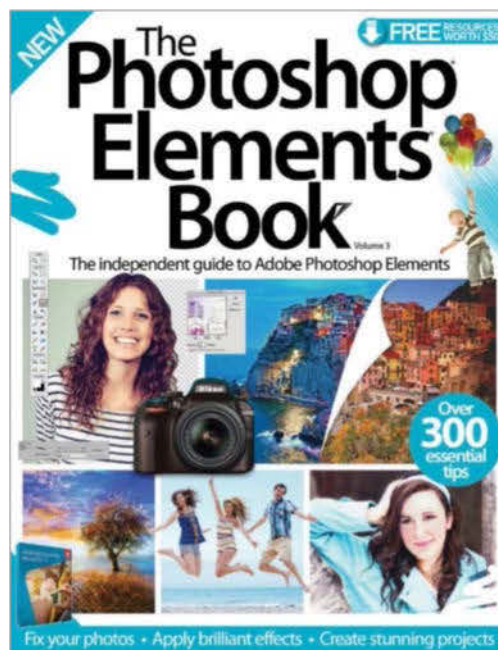


Bevel and Emboss

06 Go to the duplicate layer of your original picture and Ctrl/right-click the layer to go to Blending Options. Head to the Bevel & Emboss section of Layer Style and choose Depth: 105%, Size: 10px and Soften: 10px to complete.

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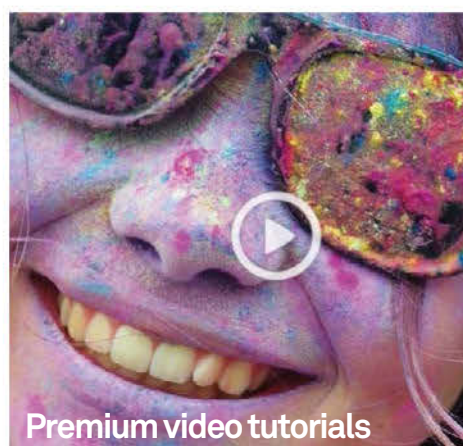
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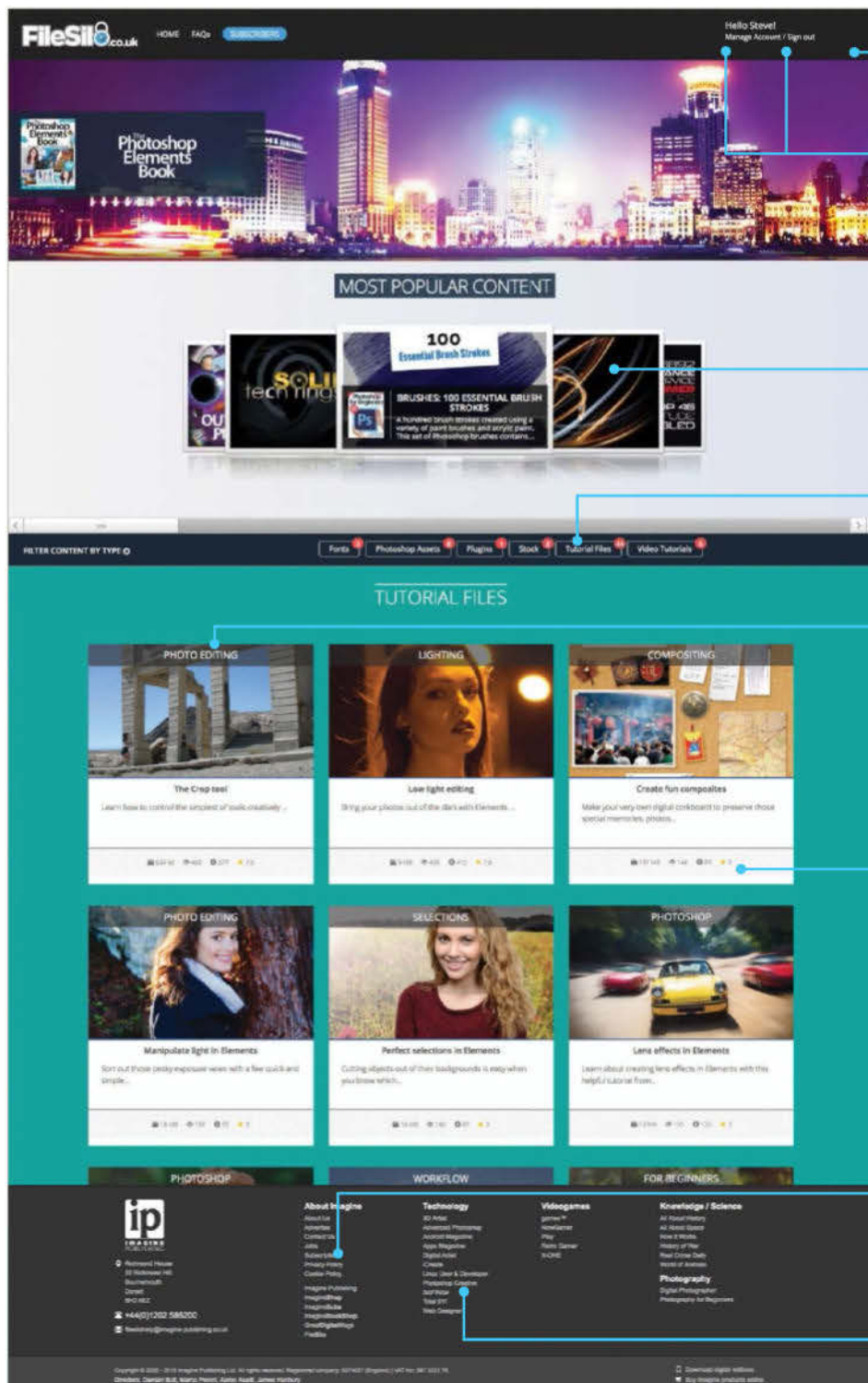
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